

The Impact  
of Scripture in  
Early Christianity

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*Edited by*  
J. den Boeft &  
M.L. van Poll-  
van de Lisdonk

BRILL

THE IMPACT OF SCRIPTURE  
IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

SUPPLEMENTS TO  
VIGILIAE CHRISTIANAE

*Formerly Philosophia Patrum*

TEXTS AND STUDIES OF EARLY CHRISTIAN LIFE  
AND LANGUAGE

EDITORS

J. DEN BOEFT — R. VAN DEN BROEK — W.L. PETERSEN  
D.T. RUNIA — J.C.M. VAN WINDEN

VOLUME XLIV



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BRILL  
LEIDEN · BOSTON · KÖLN  
1999



The editors gratefully acknowledge the financial support provided by the Dutch  
Foundation for Early Christian Studies.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

The impact of scripture in early Christianity / edited by Jan den  
Boeft and M.L. van Poll.

p. cm. — (Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* ; v. 44)

Includes index.

ISBN 9004111433 (cloth : alk. paper)

1. Bible—Influence. 2. Church history—Primitive and early  
church, ca. 30-600. I. Boeft, J. den II. Poll, M. L. van.

III. Series.

BS538.7.I56 1999

220'.09'015—dc21

98-51547

CIP

### **Die Deutsche Bibliothek – CIP-Einheitsaufnahme**

The **impact of scripture in early Christianity** / ed. by Jan den  
Boeft and M.L. van Poll. - Leiden ; Boston ; Köln : Brill, 1999

(Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* ; Vol. 44)

ISBN 90-04-11143-3

### **[*Vigiliae Christianae* / Supplements]**

Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* : formerly *Philosophia Patrum* ;  
texts and studies of early Christian life and language. - Leiden ;  
Boston ; Köln : Brill.

Früher Schriftenreihe

ISSN 0920-623X

Vol. 44. The impact of scripture in early Christianity. - 1999

ISSN 0920-623X

ISBN 90 04 11143 3

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACO	Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, ed. E. Schwartz, Berlin, 1914-1940; J. Straub, 1971
ANF	The Ante-Nicene Fathers
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung, hrsg. von H. Temporini und W. Haase, Berlin-New York, 1972 sqq.
BAGB	Bulletin de l'association Guillaume Budé
BCT	Bulletin voor Charismatische Theologie
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BZNW	Beihfte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CCSG	Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca, Turnhout-Leuven, 1977 sqq.
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, Turnhout, 1953 sqq.
CPG	Clavis patrum Graecorum (I-IV), cura et studio M. Geerard, Turnhout, 1974-1983
CPL	Clavis patrum Latinorum, hrsg. von E. Dekkers, A. Gaar, Steenbrugge, 1961 <sup>2</sup>
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, Wien, 1866 sqq.
CSLP	Corpus scriptorum Latinorum Paravianum
CUF	Collection des universités de France
Diekamp	F. Diekamp, Doctrina patrum de incarnatione Verbi. Ein griechisches Florilegium aus der Wende des siebenten und achten Jahrhunderts, Münster, 1907
ETL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, Louvain, 1924 sqq.
FMS	Frümittelalterliche Studien
FZPT	Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der erste drei Jahrhunderte, Leipzig, 1897 sqq.
JbAC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Münster, 1958 sqq.
JTS	The Journal of Theological Studies
LCI	Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie
MBT	Münsterische Beiträge zur Theologie
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
MGH AA	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi, 1877-1919
MGH Epp.	Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistulae, 1887 sqq.
NPNF	The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
NT	Novum Testamentum. An international Quarterly for New Testament and Related Studies, Leiden, 1956 sqq.
PG	Patrologia Graeca, J.P. Migne, Paris, 1857-1866
PIR <sup>1</sup> / PIR <sup>2</sup>	Prosopographia imperii Romani saec. I. II. III., Berlin, 1897-1898; 1933 <sup>2</sup> sqq.
PL	Patrologia Latina, J.P. Migne, Paris, 1844-1864
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien, Berlin, 1964 sqq.
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, hrsg. von Th. Klauser, Stuttgart, 1950 sqq.
RbK	Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst
RE	Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft. Neue Bearbeitung, besorgt von G. Wissowa, fortgeführt von W. Kroll und K. Mittelhaus, hrsg. von K. Ziegler, Stuttgart, München, 1893-1978

REAug	Revue des études augustiniennes, Paris, 1955 sqq.
RecAug	Recherches augustiniennes
ROC	Revue de l' Orient chrétien, Paris, 1896 sqq.
RSA	Rivista storica dell'Antichità
SC	Sources chrétiennes, ed. H. de Lubac, J. Daniélou, Paris 1941 sqq.
TU	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur. Archiv für die griechisch-christlichen Schriftsteller der erste drei Jahrhunderte, Leipzig-Berlin, 1882 sqq.
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

## INTRODUCTION

*Homo timens deum voluntatem eius in scripturis sanctis diligenter inquit*, 'a person who fears God earnestly seeks His will in Scripture' (Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* III 1.1). It is hardly possible to think of a phrase wording the difference between early Christianity and Graeco-Roman polytheism more succinctly. Greeks and Romans were certainly eager to know the will of their gods, but they had to rely on signs and oracles which they held to be indispensable in the process of making correct decisions. It is true that in the course of time written texts began to exercise their influence: Homer, the books of Orphism, Virgil, and the Hermetic corpus spring to mind. However, in spite of their well-nigh sacred character such authoritative texts did not go beyond providing knowledge and insight into the structure of the cosmos and the human soul. Revealing divine will was another matter, and for all the undeniable similarities between the Bible and sacred pagan texts this basic difference cannot be overlooked. The author of the Bible was God Himself, who made use of human writers. In their various styles they served the same truth, announcing God's will to everyone ready to take the necessary pains in order to grasp it. As is well known, in actual practice the authority of Scripture, to which all Christians implicitly or explicitly subscribed, neither resulted in their completely taking leave of pagan ideas nor in shaping uniform rules of conduct. However, this detracts nothing from the general conviction to which Augustine bears testimony in the quoted text.

In March 1996 the Dutch Foundation for Early Christian Studies celebrated its thirty-fifth anniversary with a conference on the forms in which the Bible put its stamp on the various aspects of Christian life in (late) Antiquity. Most of the contributions of Belgian and Dutch scholars taking part in the conference have been gathered in this volume.

It is not surprising that from the beginning the biblical text was handled with much respect and soon became the object of scholarly attention. In his introductory contribution A. Hilhorst provides a survey of early Christian philological work on the text, of which Origen's *Hexapla* is the most remarkable specimen as far as the original text is concerned. This great achievement was later overshadowed

owed by Jerome's famous efforts as a translator. He succeeded in producing an authoritative Latin version of the holy texts. Indeed Jerome became the Western biblical scholar par excellence and he also proved able to render account of his principles in his 57th *Letter*. Translating and explaining Scripture was a daunting task. Holiness was not merely a general quality assigned to it by the religious awe of its readers, but appeared in its very words, which were regarded as deriving from the Word itself. Small wonder that precision in textual matters became the hallmark of all kinds of ecclesiastical discussions.

Scripture's authority made itself felt in the various domains of early Christian life. B. Dehandschutter shows that biblical inspiration is manifest in the documents of martyrdom and that the reflections on this phenomenon gradually developed into an explicit martyrological theology, in which the actualization of biblical texts about imitation and discipleship was prominent. Scripture had laid the foundation for martyrdom. Later, in the fourth century, the monk succeeded the martyr. The ascetes also strove to put the words of Scripture into practice and the Gospels provided the basic texts for the various forms of monastic life. Indeed, G.J.M. Bartelink marshals ample evidence of the view that Scripture as such sufficed as a guidebook, with biblical heroes functioning as inspiring guides. Specifically, the *Psalms* were used as the source for meditations. Knowing the *Psalms* by heart was essential for all monks. The Eucharist was at the centre of early Christian liturgy. The prayers within the different phases of its celebration were full of scriptural reminiscences, as A.A.R. Bastiaensen shows. Biblical texts can be present in their literal shape, but in many cases a stylistic elaboration has taken place. This does not preclude the biblical text being at the core of all liturgical prayers, as is evident from their vocabulary. A more difficult part of early Christian life consists in the 'gifts of the Spirit', as these are defined or described in the New Testament. M.F. Parmentier examines the continuity of certain clusters—or 'pairs', as he styles them, of biblical texts—in the tradition of these gifts. This tradition has its drawbacks. The gift of languages ('xenoglossy') tends to be confused with 'glossolalia', an entirely different phenomenon, viz. spirit language, which is difficult or even impossible to understand for an outsider.

There can therefore be no doubt that from the beginning Scripture was the decisive force in shaping both life and doctrine. It inspired all sorts of new texts, exegetical, paraenetical, practical etc.,

and became a guide for faith and piety. However, the written word found its counterpart in the image: after all, *ut pictura poesis* was a conviction firmly held by many in antiquity. Here one should beware of any rectilinear iconographic interpretations of early Christian artistic products, as if the various Old and New Testament scenes are simply the illustrations of central truths of Christian faith, specifically *Christus salus mundi*. A. Provoost considers it indispensable to study closely the development of scenes and motifs, for this will clarify the fact that in many cases not so much are biblical scenes depicted with a paradigmatic intention as biblical themes are hinted at in a symbolical manner. Even current pagan symbols could be used to this end, of course in a modified way. In the later stages of this development, the official doctrines of the Church gradually began to dominate iconography. The early illustrated Gospel books are an interesting example. They testify to the preferences of sixth century-Christians who were in a position to have such books made. But, as I. Spatharakis shows, they are also precious witnesses of both the earlier style of illustrating the text on papyrus scrolls and the now often lost monumental paintings in churches, which were evidently imitated in a number of cases by the painters of miniatures. Generally speaking, the biblical text provided the inspiration, either directly or indirectly, by way of the Church liturgy. The authority of Scripture's words poses a problem with regard to those who could not read. Of course, they could listen to others reading a passage to them, e.g. the lector during Church services, but, as Pope Gregory the Great stressed, pictures could have a useful function as a substitute for texts: *pro lectione pictura est*. This phrase is interesting in that the text remains the standard. P.C.J. van Dael studies the various ways in which ecclesiastical authorities rendered account of the usefulness of wall paintings: they refer to what is already known and thus render excellent service to the memory.

Scripture thus provided ample material for all kinds of artistic representations, but it functioned to no less an extent as a source for poets and scholars. The fourth century poet Paulinus of Nola undertook to promote the cult of the local saint Felix in his poetry, which demonstrates his great familiarity with the Bible. *Carmen* 26 is a remarkable example of this. Here Paulinus expresses his faith in Felix' protection against the menacing approach of Alaric in 402. The times are trying, yet God's mighty deeds reported in the Old Testament are a guarantee of His support in the present and Felix will



prove to be equal to the great saints of the past. His *dies natalis* can be celebrated in the usual way. By a wealth of references to the Bible the poet links Felix' feats to the mighty actions of the past, as Evenepoel shows. *Vetusta saecula vidimus*, Ambrose would have said. A clear example of reworking a scriptural passage is presented by G. Partoens. He deals with Prudentius, *Contra Symmachum* II 1020-1063, a passage which contains a most interesting poetical elaboration of the parable of the sower in *Matthew* 13. Prudentius introduces the classical concept of *animi cultura*, a metaphor derived from agriculture, in his reading of the parable. He christianized this concept by stressing man's need of divine help and he also developed the idea that agricultural work has a spiritual sense. In fact, the contours of a new style of life become clear in Prudentius' rich poetical transformation of the biblical text.

In the hands of the clergy the Bible could become a formidable weapon against heretical and other undesirable groups. Cyril of Alexandria is a case in point. A. Davids focuses on the the beginnings of his episcopate in Alexandria and his first annual *Festal Letters*, in which the Law and the Prophets are amply used to attack the Jews. Rejecting Christ, they failed to appreciate the final renewal in the history of mankind. At present such a way of using the Bible makes a somewhat uncomfortable impression, but in those times Cyril was by no means an exception. Fortunately there are numerous examples of a quite different handling of biblical material. P. van Deun elucidates how Greek Fathers in general and Maximus Confessor in particular developed a Christian terminology for prayer, with specific attention to εὐχή and προσευχή and the cognate verbs, which both occur very often in the LXX and the New Testament. The latter term became the usual one for supplication; it denotes 'asking God's blessings'.

The last two papers deal with 'hermeneutical' problems. After a succinct survey of modern reader-oriented exegetical strategies and their advantages, H. Welzen studies in some detail the part allotted to Old Testament texts in *Hebrews*. The author of this homily (with an accompanying letter) wants his readers to understand in a special way the texts he quotes or alludes to. This implies certain transformations of these texts and ultimately a typological relationship between *Psalms* 94 and *Hebrews* ch. 7 clearly emerges. The most impressive treatise on the correct handling of Scripture is Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*. I. Sluiter shows how this treatise belongs to a long tradition of thinking about language and texts, with prime attention

to the process of speech communication, which makes it possible to transmit our thoughts to another mind. Augustine lays down the exegetical principles in the first three books and then turns to the need for effective communication in book 4, in which he sketches the contours of Christian eloquence. Just like correct exegesis, this depends on divine enlightenment, and Augustine therefore advocates a new interpretation of the word *orator*, viz. 'man of prayer'.

Not many early Christian scholars or thinkers would have been able to contrive the elegant and solid consistency of Augustine's thought. Yet both in their practical use of the Bible and in their reflections on its correct use they continually testify to a basic conviction that 'it is absolutely essential to hold on to the words of Scripture', *verba scripturarum tenere maxime necessarium est*. This phrase of Augustine in *De doctrina christiana* IV 5.8 concerns the wise ecclesiastical speaker, but the rule can be safely applied to all early Christian handling of the Bible.

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December, 1998



## BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH

A. Hilhorst

From the outset, Christians have read Scripture for its spiritual content and not normally studied it as if it were just an object of academic interest. Nevertheless, it is a text, and, in order for it to produce a beneficial effect, it has to be looked after just like any other text, especially if it is read in environments different from the one in which it came into being. So, not surprisingly, philological care of the biblical text set in at an early date. It is the purpose of this paper to evoke some of the achievements the patristic period can boast of in this field. Before doing so, however, some remarks on the spread and availability of the biblical text among the early Christians should be made.

### *Spread of the Bible*

Jesus proclaimed his gospel by word of mouth and so did his immediate followers. But, in the fifties at the latest, Paul made use of written messages and the communities of believers were not long in keeping and exchanging his letters. We catch a glimpse of that in the New Testament. In the Letter to the Colossians (4.16), we read:

And when this letter is read before you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and you yourselves read the one from Laodicea.<sup>1</sup>

As time went on, the communities must have possessed many more biblical texts, not only of the New but also of the Old Testament.

Even individuals collected manuscripts, and Jerome narrates an action of biblical propaganda which reminds us of that of the so-called Gideons of our own times. As he states in *Adversus Rufinum* 1.9 (CSEL 79.9.15-19), the presbyter Pamphilus in Caesarea, who died a martyr in 309, was

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<sup>1</sup> Renderings of New Testament passages are taken from the New American Bible. Septuagint renderings are from the old translation by L.L. Brenton; verse numbering, however, follows Rahlfs. The Psalms are referred to by their Septuagint numbering.

ever ready to distribute copies of Sacred Scriptures not only for reading, but even for private keeping. Not only to men, but even to the women whom he found to be interested in reading them. Thus he prepared many copies, so that he might present them as gifts, when the occasion arose, to those who wanted them. (trans. J.N. Hritzu)

This is not to say that this referred to complete bibles. First of all, the canon, in any case the New Testament canon, was still in the making. Although the four gospels and the letters of St Paul had a regular place in it about A.D. 200, the Christian canon was closed only in the fourth century. Moreover, there is an economic factor. Even if writing material, papyrus and also parchment, was not too expensive,<sup>2</sup> copying the whole Old and New Testaments must have cost a fortune. The big biblical codices comprising the complete text of the Scriptures are a creation of the fourth century, after the persecutions had come to an end.

It must have been a privilege to have the text of the Bible in one's library.<sup>3</sup> Yet that was by no means the sole access to God's word. The ancients, just like so many other people outside the modern world, had a memory training we can only dream of.<sup>4</sup> We tend to shiver at the thought of having to learn masses of texts by heart, and everything helps us to make such an effort superfluous. Confining myself to biblical matter, complete bibles in a manageable size can be bought for a song, and the computerized Bible text is available both in the original languages and in all sorts of translations. Access is further facilitated through the existence of concordances, synopses, dictionaries, manuals and encyclopaedias. All these aids spare us the necessity of memorizing the texts for ourselves. We honour insight much more than factual knowledge and we look up what we need.

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<sup>2</sup> The evidence of the prices of papyrus and especially parchment is scant, however. Cf. L. Koep, "Buch I", *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, II, 1954, cols. 664-688, esp. cols. 672 and 678; C.H. Roberts, "The Codex", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 40, 1954, pp. 169-204, esp. p. 179; T.C. Skeat, "Was Papyrus Regarded as «cheap» or «expensive» in the Ancient World?", *Aegyptus* 75, 1995, pp. 75-93.

<sup>3</sup> For information on Christian private libraries cf. H.Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven and London, 1995), pp. 174-176, 231-237.

<sup>4</sup> Information on learning by heart is provided by Th. Klauser, "Auswendiglernen", *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, I, 1950, cols. 1030-1039; H.-I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* (Paris, 1965<sup>6</sup>), pp. 251-252; F.A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago and London, 1966), p. 16; H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik*, (Munich, 1972<sup>2</sup>), I, pp. 525-527; II, p. 973; W.V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1989), pp. 30-33, 91, 301.

We distrust our memories and tend to suppose that quoting from memory is bound to lead to gross errors. Of course this danger is real. On the other hand, a trained memory is able to store huge masses of text. In Antiquity, rhapsodes knew Homer by heart. Similar reports have been preserved of Jewish scholars. As Saul Lieberman writes, 'there is no evidence that the Rabbis prepared special lexica of the Bible; they had no need of them. The entire rabbinic literature bears testimony to the fact that the Rabbis knew the Bible by heart. Jerome testifies that the Palestinian Jews of the fourth century were able to recite the Pentateuch and the Prophets by heart.'<sup>5</sup> Among the Christians, Didymus the Blind, Jerome's teacher, lost the light of his eyes at the age of five, which did not prevent him from writing an impressive number of biblical commentaries.<sup>6</sup> Even in modern times, such mnemonic achievements have not died out. The Jewish scholar Judah L. Palache, who was appointed as a Professor of Old Testament studies at the University of Amsterdam in 1924, did not need to take a copy of the *Biblia Hebraica* with him when lecturing, since he knew the entire Old Testament by heart.<sup>7</sup> To return to the early Christians, not only the well-educated among them, but also the illiterate majority was able to gain a close acquaintance with the biblical texts, with which they were made familiar in catechesis and, still more so, in worship, where it was usual to read Scripture in long segments.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Literary Transmission, Beliefs and Manners of Palestine in the I Century B.C.E.—IV Century C.E.* (Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America 18; New York, 1922–1962), p. 52 (with references). Cf. also B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis 22; Lund and Copenhagen, 1961), pp. 62–65, 95–96, 122–126.

<sup>6</sup> See G.W. Marchal, *Didymus de Blinde en zijn interpretatie van het boek Job*, Diss. Utrecht (Sneek, 1977), pp. 45–46.

<sup>7</sup> M.A. Beek, "Levensbericht over de auteur", in J.L. Palache, *Inleiding in de Talmoe* (Volksuniversiteitsbibliotheek 2,51; Haarlem, 1954<sup>2</sup>), pp. vii–xii, esp. p. x; B. Dicou, "Het propaedeutisch onderwijs in het bijbels Hebreeuws aan de Gemeentelijke Universiteit van Amsterdam. Van de oprichting van de Universiteit tot de Tweede Wereldoorlog (1877–1940)", in K.A. Deurloo and F.J. Hoogewoud (eds.), *Beginnen bij de letter Beth: Opstellen over het Bijbels Hebreeuws en de Hebreeuwse Bijbel voor Dr Aleida G. van Daalen, leesmoeder in Amsterdam* (Kampen, 1985), pp. 17–26, esp. pp. 21, 22.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Gamble (n. 3) pp. 8, 141, 205, 333 n. 104.

*Work on the text*

The patristic age witnessed a variety of efforts to keep the Bible text in its purity, to unravel its obscurities and to make it accessible to new groups. The topic deserves a book of its own. Here we can only present a number of activities.

1. *Textual criticism: the Hexapla*

Greek-speaking Christians read the Jewish Bible in its Greek translation, commonly called the Septuagint, and their brethren in the West, at least in the first centuries, used a Latin translation of the Septuagint, a translation of a translation. This was not felt to be a problem. The Septuagint was widely believed to be an inspired book,<sup>9</sup> and it was also used by the Jews, especially those living in the Diaspora. Nevertheless, difficulties might arise. The fact is, in discussions with Jewish scholars, the Christians would remonstrate over passages taken from the Old Testament. This, however, was a tricky business. Since they had no command of Hebrew and consequently quoted from the Septuagint, they might be accused of distorting the Bible and using fake passages.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, Septuagint renderings might be incorrect, but, in addition, the Hebrew Bible text of the first Christian centuries differed seriously in certain places from the Hebrew text which had been the *Vorlage* used by the Septuagint translators.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Cf. M. Harl, G. Dorival and O. Munnich, *Bible grecque des Septante du judaïsme hellénistique au christianisme ancien* (Initiations au christianisme ancien; [Paris], 1988), pp. 41, 46-47, 289, 294-295, and in particular C. Perrot, "L'inspiration des Septante et le pouvoir scripturaire", in G. Dorival and O. Munnich (eds.), *Κατὰ τοὺς ο΄. Selon les Septante: Trente études sur la Bible grecque des Septante en hommage à Marguerite Harl* (Paris, 1995), pp. 169-183, who also lists the earlier literature.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. M. Simon, *Verus Israel: Étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et Juifs dans l'Empire romain (135-425)* (Paris, 1964<sup>2</sup>), pp. 184-185; N.R.M. de Lange, *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine* (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 25; Cambridge etc., 1976), pass.; P. Nautin, *Origène: Sa vie et son œuvre* (Christianisme antique 1; Paris, 1977), p. 346; E. Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments: Eine Einführung in die Biblia Hebraica* (Stuttgart, 1988<sup>3</sup>), p. 63; Harl—Dorival—Munnich (n. 9) pp. 122-125, 164-165, 290; H. Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (1.-11. Jh.)* (Europäische Hochschulschriften 23.172; Frankfurt on the Main etc., 1995<sup>3</sup>), p. 330.

<sup>11</sup> See E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis and Assen/Maastricht, 1992), p. 142; G. Veltri, *Eine Tora für den König Talmai: Untersuchungen zum Übersetzungsverständnis in der jüdisch-hellenistischen und rabbinischen Literatur* (Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 41; Tübingen, 1994), pp. 22-112.

This problem was tackled in a radical way by the great third-century theologian Origen. Feeling the need of a direct comparison between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint, he devised a tool that presented both texts in a synoptic arrangement; for reasons that will presently become clear, this work went down in history as the *Hexapla*, the Sixfold. How did he proceed?<sup>12</sup> He divided his parchment into six columns and filled them in from the left to the right as follows: in the first column he wrote the Hebrew text current in his day,<sup>13</sup> in the second one the same text in Greek transliteration, in the third one a most literal Greek translation from Hebrew, made c. A.D. 130 by Aquila, in the fourth one a still more recent translation, in better Greek, by Symmachus. Aquila and Symmachus were Greek-speaking Jews.<sup>14</sup> These four columns collectively provided all the information one needed: the Hebrew text in Hebrew and Greek characters and Greek translations, both literal and free, in order to reflect the form as well as the tenor of the original. There were, however, still a fifth and a sixth column. Of these, the fifth was filled by the Septuagint. As I remarked already, the Septuagint sometimes diverged from the Hebrew text of Origen's time. This was carefully marked. If a piece of text was absent from the Septuagint, he filled the gap, putting an asterisk before it. The opposite case, a piece of

<sup>12</sup> For the following, details may be found in Nautin (n. 10) 303-361; N. Fernández Marcos, *Introducción a las versiones griegas de la Biblia* (Textos y Estudios «Cardenal Cisneros» 23; Madrid, 1979), pp. 191-211; Harl—Dorival—Munnich (n. 9) pp. 162-168. There is an interesting survey on “Tabular presentation in antiquity and in nineteenth-century classical philology” in J. Mansfeld and D.T. Runia, *Aëtiana: The Method and Intellectual Context of a Doxographer*, I, *The Sources* (Philosophia Antiqua 73; Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1997), pp. 111-120 (p. 111 on the Hexapla).

<sup>13</sup> It is still a matter of dispute whether Origen made himself familiar with Hebrew or whether he relied for that language on Jewish assistants. Whereas G. Sgherri, “A proposito di Origene e la lingua ebraica”, *Augustinianum* 14, 1974, pp. 223-257, argues for a serious knowledge of Hebrew on Origen's part, Nautin (n. 10) pp. 336-337, D. Barthélemy, *Études d'histoire du texte de l'Ancien Testament* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 21; Fribourg and Göttingen, 1978), pp. 162-163, 210, followed by Harl—Dorival—Munnich (n. 9) p. 290, denies him any familiarity with it. N.R.M. de Lange (n. 10) pp. 21-23, 152-154, Fernández Marcos (n. 12) pp. 191-193 and B. Neuschäfer, *Origenes als Philologe* (Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft 18,1-2; Basel, 1987), pp. 95-96, are somewhere in between.

<sup>14</sup> The problems related to the texts of Aquila and Symmachus as well as Theodotion presently to be mentioned cannot be unfolded here. See E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135): A New English Version Revised and Edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Goodman*, III.1 (Edinburgh, 1986), pp. 493-504 (Aquila and Theodotion only); Harl—Dorival—Munnich (n. 9) pp. 142-157; Tov (n. 11) pp. 145-147.



Septuagint text lacking in the Hebrew, he marked with an obelus. Finally, in the sixth column, he placed the translation by Theodotion, a Jewish translation from the middle of the first century A.D. Actually, it is not so much a new translation as a revision of the Septuagint text according to the Hebrew.

In this way Origen established a magnificent documentation, which enabled Christian scholars to inform themselves about the omissions in and the additions to the Septuagint, about the Hebrew text, in transliteration if desired, and about the exact content of that Hebrew text both in a literal reproduction and in a readable rendering. Given the fact that this work comprised six Old Testaments written side by side and that the writing was done in not too small characters and without abbreviations worthy of mention, this *Hexapla* clearly filled many codices; it has been calculated to have consisted of at least 6,500 pages.<sup>15</sup> Consequently it must have been a very expensive production, which was preserved in the library in Caesarea and probably was never copied in its entirety.<sup>16</sup> Partial transcriptions, however, were made, and a large part of the Psalms has been recovered. A century and a half later Jerome could still consult the *Hexapla* but afterwards the ravages of time caused its irretrievable loss.<sup>17</sup> Taken altogether, it was a philological achievement of a stature which reminds one of the great polyglot Bible editions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

## 2. *Comparing the gospels: Eusebius' synoptic system*

One of the basic tools we use in studying the differences and agreements between the gospels is the synopsis, which presents the texts in parallel columns. Christian Antiquity had to do without this tool but did use another one, known as the canons of Eusebius. Its author is the well-known Church historian and biblical scholar Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, who lived from c. 260 to c. 340. His aim was to

<sup>15</sup> H.B. Swete—R.R. Ottley, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (Cambridge, 1914 = New York, 1968), p. 74.

<sup>16</sup> Swete—Ottley (n. 15) pp. 74, 76. Cf. G. Cavallo, "Scuola, scriptorium, biblioteca a Cesarea" in id. (ed.), *Le biblioteche nel mondo antico e medievale* (Biblioteca Universale Laterza 250; Rome and Bari, 1988), pp. 65-78, esp. p. 71.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. F. Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt*, I (Oxford, 1875 = Hildesheim, 1964), pp. xcvi-c ( "De fatis Hexaplorum post Origenis obitum"); Cavallo (n. 16) pp. 72-75.

devise a system indicating, for each section of a given gospel, which sections in the other gospels, if any, corresponded with it.<sup>18</sup>

To begin with, he demarcated and numbered the sections. There are 335 sections in Matthew, 236 in Mark, 342 in Luke, and 232 in John. He wrote the numbers down in the margins. Then he established a chart showing the correspondences between the sections of the different gospels. He organized his material in ten lists of possible combinations (these are the 'canons of Eusebius'). The first canon offers the sections occurring in all of the gospels. Canons 2 to 4 list the sections shared by three gospels: canon 2 Matthew, Mark and Luke, canon 3 Matthew, Luke and John, and canon 4 Matthew, Mark and John. The fifth to ninth canons contain the sections occurring in two out of the four gospels: 5 Matthew—Luke, 6 Matthew—Mark, 7 Matthew—John, 8 Luke—Mark, and 9 Luke—John. The tenth and last canon contains the sections occurring in only one of the gospels.<sup>19</sup> Thus each section belongs to one and only one of the ten canons. The number of this canon is appended to the section numbers in the margins of the text. For instance, Luke 11.5-8, has 124 as its section number; it does not correspond to a section in any of the other gospels, so it belongs to canon 10. This is indicated: 124.10. Students of the gospels were thus spared the trouble of looking up the tables to see if there were corresponding sections: section 10 contains the *Sondergut*. Conversely, Luke 20.1-8 is numbered 240, which belongs to canon 2 (Matthew, Mark, Luke). A glance at the tables reveals that it corresponds to section 217 of Matthew, which is Matt. 21.23-27 in our modern numbering, and section 127 of Mark, which is Mark 11.27-33.

Eusebius' canons were to have a lasting success; they are added to countless gospel manuscripts both in Greek, Syriac etc., and Latin.<sup>20</sup> Even now they are regarded as being sufficiently useful to print them in the leading New Testament edition by Nestle and Aland.

<sup>18</sup> For the following, cf. K. and B. Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids and Leiden, 1987), pp. 174, 247-248, 250-251; F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone (eds.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford, 1997), p. 574; Mansfeld—Runia (n. 12) pp. 115-116.

<sup>19</sup> In the canons of three gospels (2 to 4) and those of two gospels (5 to 9), one combination each is lacking: that of Mark, Luke and John and that of John and Mark, respectively, for the simple reason that these combinations do not occur in the New Testament.

<sup>20</sup> B. Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 188, 209.

### 3. *Biblical idiom: Hadrian's Introduction*

In the first half of the fifth century, an important reference work for biblical language and style saw the light, the Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τὰς θείας γραφάς by the Greek monk Hadrian.<sup>21</sup> It is not what we would call an 'Introduction to the Bible', but a well-organised survey of biblical words and turns of phrase. It contains many striking remarks and testifies to the intimate knowledge Christian exegetes had of the peculiarities of biblical language. Thus Hadrian points out that Scripture often has the verb in the future where we should expect an aorist and vice versa (§96), which is one of the more remarkable Semitisms of the Septuagint.<sup>22</sup> The author has also a subtle feeling for the senses a word can have. Let us take his discussion of σάρξ as an example (§ 92):

Often the word 'flesh' is used. This may be meant in its physical sense, as in 'They have given the flesh of thy holy ones for the wild beasts of the earth' (Ps. 78.2), or to indicate wickedness, as in 'My Spirit shall certainly not remain among these men forever, because they are flesh' (Gen. 6.4), or to indicate mortality, as in 'And he remembered that they are flesh; a wind that passes away' (Ps. 77.39), and 'All flesh is grass' (Is. 40.6). Likewise the Apostle says 'Even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh' (2 Cor. 5.16), i.e. in his mortal form, and as in 'In the days when he was in the flesh' (Heb. 5.7) and 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God' (1 Cor. 15.50) and 'Insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith' (Gal. 2.20), or in the sense of kinship, as with Hosea 'My flesh is of them' (Hos. 9.12) and 'Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh, yesterday and the third day' (2 Kings [= 2 Sam.] 5.1-2), and 'Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh' (2 Kings [= 2 Sam.] 19.12) and, as is said to Amessai, 'Art thou not my bone and my flesh?'

<sup>21</sup> See F. Goessling, *Adrians Εἰσαγωγή εἰς τὰς θείας γραφάς aus neu aufgefundenen Handschriften herausgegeben, übersetzt und erläutert* (Berlin, 1887), pp. 1-68; G. Mercati, "Pro Adriano", *Revue Biblique Internationale* 11, 1914, pp. 246-255 and in id., *Opere Minori* III (Studi e Testi 78; Vatican City, 1937), pp. 383-392; C. Schäublin, *Untersuchungen zu Methode und Herkunft der antiochenischen Exegese* (Theophaneia 23; Cologne and Bonn, 1974), p. 138 n. 222.

<sup>22</sup> F.W. Mozley, *The Psalter of the Church: The Septuagint Psalms Compared with the Hebrew, with Various Notes* (Cambridge, 1905), pp. xvi-xvii. This phenomenon also makes itself felt in the Latin Bible translations, cf. F. Kaulen, *Sprachliches Handbuch zur biblischen Vulgata: Eine systematische Darstellung ihres lateinischen Sprachcharakters* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1904<sup>2</sup> = Hildesheim and New York, 1973), pp. 226-227; A. Blaise, *Manuel du latin chrétien* (Strasbourg, 1955 = Turnhout, 1986), pp. 128-129, as Jerome more than once points out, cf. G.Q.A. Meershoek, *Le latin biblique d'après saint Jérôme: Aspects linguistiques de la rencontre entre la Bible et le monde classique* (Latinitas Christianorum Primaeva 20; Nijmegen and Utrecht, 1966), p. 24.

(2 Kings [= 2 Sam.] 19.13) and 'In order to make my race [litt. 'flesh'] jealous' (Rom. 11.14).

A modern lexicographer would not need to be ashamed of such a survey.

Among the figures of speech, he discusses the hyperbole, illustrating his exposition with, *inter alia*, the following texts (§121): 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle' (Matt. 19.24), 'If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out' (Matt. 5.29), 'Not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law' (Matt. 5.18). This is good evidence for an exegetical practice of trying to understand what a text has to say instead of explaining away seemingly strange statements by allegorising or other means.

#### 4. *Translation: the Vulgate*

In the Greek world, Christians could use the Bible translations made by Jews; when preparing his *Hexapla*, Origen did not need to translate personally. In the Latin West, things were different. There may have been Jewish translations of the Bible into Latin; this is still a matter of dispute.<sup>23</sup> In any case, from the second century onwards, Latin Christians have produced translations, both of the Old Testament, i.e. the Septuagint, and of the New Testament. These were partial ones, made in different places and times by people unknown to us. Together they are called the 'Old Latin Versions'. They had different drawbacks: their stylistic level, their obscurities, the text from which they were made, their irritating mutual differences. To overcome these inconveniences, Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome in c. 382 to revise the biblical text.<sup>24</sup> Jerome started work in 383 and corrected the Old Latin text of the four Gospels in accordance with the Greek; he also revised a number of Old Testament books according to the

<sup>23</sup> See V. Colomi, "L'uso del greco nella liturgia del giudaismo ellenistico e la Novella 146 di Giustiniano", *Annali di Storia del Diritto* 8, 1964, pp. 19-80, esp. pp. 75-78; G. Quispel, "African Christianity before Minucius Felix and Tertullian", in J. den Boeft and A.H.M. Kessels (eds.), *Actus: Studies in Honour of H.L.W. Nelson* (Utrecht, 1982), pp. 257-335, esp. pp. 260-265; B. Kedar, "The Latin Translations", in M.J. Mulder (ed.), *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum 2,1; Assen/Maastricht and Philadelphia, 1988), pp. 299-338, esp. pp. 308-311, 337.

<sup>24</sup> For details of Jerome's work, see Kedar (n. 23) pp. 313-338; D. Brown, *Vir Trilinguis: A Study in the Biblical Exegesis of Saint Jerome* (Kampen, 1992), pp. 87-120; C. Brown Tkacz, "Labor tam utilis: The Creation of the Vulgate", *Vigiliae Christianae* 50, 1996, pp. 42-72.

Septuagint.<sup>25</sup> In c. 390 he changed his tack, translating the Old Testament directly from the Hebrew and in a much freer style than the Old Latin had done. The job was finished in 405. It resulted in a text which eventually was called the Vulgate and was to remain the official text of the Catholic Church until April 27, 1979.<sup>26</sup>

This translation, the only ancient Bible version which is the work of one person, is an achievement which measures up to Origen's *Hexapla*. Unlike Origen, Jerome had to do with not one foreign language, the Hebrew, but two, Greek and Hebrew. Knowledge of Greek was not too exceptional among educated Latin speaking Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries, although no less a brain than Augustine had his difficulties with it. Hebrew, however, was a different matter. According to his own statements, Jerome familiarized himself with Hebrew, helped by a Jewish teacher.<sup>27</sup> But can we trust his assertions? Jerome was able to consult the *Hexapla* and thus take cognizance of the Hebrew text, the Septuagint (which did not always agree with the Hebrew) and three later Jewish versions, those by Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion, which had been added because, together, they gave an exact impression of the Hebrew text. If, however, Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion form, so to speak, a replica of the Hebrew text, why shouldn't one base the Latin translation upon this trio, thus sparing oneself the trouble of rendering from Hebrew, which, after all, is an exotic and difficult language? Indeed, there are occasional indications of Jerome proceeding in this way.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, we may be certain that he did master Hebrew. This comes to light both from a careful study of his translation and from the many philological remarks in his other writings.

Indeed, Jerome expresses himself frequently on translation questions in his biblical commentaries and his letters, and we cannot take our leave of him before pointing to the fact that he also gave his theoretical views on the art of translating. Particularly his 57th Letter, superscribed *Liber de optimo genere interpretandi*, which is a treatise of ten

<sup>25</sup> After Origen's Hexaplaric version. Little of it has been preserved, only Job and the Psalter, but the latter has become the official version of liturgy (the 'Gallican Psalter').

<sup>26</sup> W. Baars, "Exit Vulgata: Nabetrachting bij een Bijbelvertaling", *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 35, 1981, pp. 101-110, esp. p. 101.

<sup>27</sup> Actually, a monk of Jewish origin; cf. Kedar (n. 23) p. 315.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. C. Estin, *Les Psautiers de Jérôme à la lumière des traductions juives antérieures* (Collectanea Biblica Latina 15; Rome, 1984), pp. 25, 29-30, 37 and my review in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 17, 1986, pp. 245-248.

closely printed pages on the subject matter, is an important and interesting contribution. In it, Jerome includes a discussion of the translation technique in classical literature. His overall aim is to advocate a certain freedom of rendering.<sup>29</sup>

### 5. *Exegesis: Origen on Matthew 27.45*

It is impossible to do justice to the heart of patristic Bible studies, the explanation of the text, in the compass of a section of an article. Therefore, an exposition of patristic doctrine of the multiple sense of Scripture, or a discussion of the Alexandrian and Antiochene Schools, cannot be undertaken here. Instead, I shall present a sample of exegetical activity by one of the masters in the field, Origen, namely, his treatment of Matthew 27.45.<sup>30</sup> That verse, part of the description of Jesus' death on the cross, runs as follows:

From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. Ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς ἑκτῆς ὥρας σκότος ἐγένετο ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης.

Origen begins by stating that the enemies of the gospel have claimed that, if this miracle had happened, it would have been recorded in chronicles. In reality, they argue, the gospel text suggests a solar eclipse, but an eclipse cannot have happened the day of Jesus' death, because there was a full moon then and at full moon the moon is, seen from earth, fully sunlit, which would be impossible at a solar eclipse, for then the moon is exactly between the sun and earth and is invisible from the earth. Some Christians, Origen remarks, try to reject this sort of criticism by denying that the event in question allows a natural explanation: according to them, it is a miracle. He

<sup>29</sup> There is a text edition with a full commentary by G.J.M. Bartelink, *Hieronymus, Liber de optimo genere interpretandi (Epistula 57): Ein Kommentar* (Mnemosyne, Supplementum 61; Leiden, 1980).

<sup>30</sup> Edition: E. Klostermann, *Origenes: Werke*, XI.2, *Die Matthäuseklärung: II. Teil: Die lateinische Übersetzung der Commentariorum series* (Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller 38; Leipzig, 1933), pp. 271-278. For an annotated German translation, see H.J. Vogt, *Origenes: Der Kommentar zum Evangelium nach Matthäus*, III, *Die Commentariorum Series* (Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur 38; Stuttgart, 1993), pp. 333-338, 366-367. Earlier, Origen had given a different explanation, see G. Sgherri, "Eclissi di sole alla passione? Una nota sull'impulsività origeniana e sulla cronologia di due opere", in H. Crouzel and A. Quacquarelli (eds.), *Origeniana Secunda: Second colloque international des études origénienes* (Bari, 20-23 septembre 1977) (Quaderni di «Vetera Christianorum» 15; s.l., 1980), pp. 357-362.

himself prefers a different approach, well aware that the critics will not be impressed by the reference to a miracle. According to him, Matthew and the parallel passage in Mark 15.33 do not speak at all of a solar eclipse, so there is no need to suppose there was one. The same applies to the version with Luke, 23.44-45, which runs:

It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon and the sun was darkened. Καὶ ἦν ἡδη ὥσεὶ ὥρα ἕκτη καὶ σκότος ἐγένετο ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ὁ ἥλιος.

Admittedly, this gospel has a variant: 'because of an eclipse of the sun', τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλιπόντος, instead of 'and the sun was darkened', καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ὁ ἥλιος, but this variant, Origen feels, may either have been introduced by an innocent Christian who meant to make the text clearer or, more probably, the attackers of Christ's Church have perpetrated it in order to make fools of the Christians.<sup>31</sup> Personally, he takes the view that there was no eclipse but an extremely heavy cloud. Moreover, he adds, this darkness was probably restricted to Jerusalem, just like the other signs occurring then: the tearing of the veil in the Temple, the earthquake, the splitting of the rocks and the opening of the tombs. This refutes the other objection at the same time, namely that the darkness is not mentioned by chroniclers, for it was only a local event. The darkness, Origen continues, has a symbolic meaning. It indicates the obscuration of the Jews, who laid violent hands on Jesus, the true light. It lasted three hours; the world remained lit, only the Jewish land was darkened. After the three hours, light again came over the Jews. This is what is said in Romans 11.25-26:

A hardening has come upon Israel in part, until the full number of the Gentiles comes in, and thus all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The deliverer will come out of Zion, he will turn away godlessness from Jacob.

Finally, Origen answers the question why the darkness lasted three hours. This is because the Jews, on account of their sins, are deprived

<sup>31</sup> The reading καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ὁ ἥλιος has good manuscript evidence; it is also the one of the Textus Receptus and the Vulgate. Nestle and Nestle-Aland prefer the other one, cf. the argument in favour of it as formulated by B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart, 1975<sup>3</sup>), p. 182: 'The words καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ὁ ἥλιος ("the sun was darkened") appear to be the easier reading, substituted by copyists for τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλιπόντος [or ἐκλείποντος], which may mean either "the sun's light failed" or "the sun was eclipsed".'

of the light of three hours: the light of God the Father, the radiation of Christ (cf. Heb. 1.3) and the illumination by the Holy Spirit.

Several features of this exposition catch the eye. Origen does not content himself with execrating opponents, but rather tries to offer a reasoned interpretation. In doing so, he displays erudition, both in the field of Jewish matters—the observing of Passover at full moon—and of cosmology—the mutual positions of sun, moon, and earth. He shows himself well-versed in textual criticism, and he has the right exegetical feeling that the darkness at Jesus' death must have a meaning, otherwise it would have been left unmentioned. As a true Alexandrian, he offers an allegorical explanation: the three hours refer to the Trinity, as well as a typological one: the spiritual darkening of the Jews will come to an end. Finally, he associates the passage under discussion with passages in other biblical books, of which the Letter to the Romans is only the most conspicuous.

#### 6. *Relevance of the Mosaic Law: the Epistle of Ptolemy to Flora*

The Bible was also studied in Christian Gnostic circles, an eloquent example of which is the Epistle of Ptolemy to Flora, transmitted in the work of Epiphanius, *Panarion* 33.3-8.<sup>32</sup> Gnosticism makes a radical separation between the heavenly world of light and this imperfect earthly world. The former, the *pleroma*, is the realm of the perfect supreme god, the latter is under the sway of the wicked Demiurge or creator god. For Christian Gnostics, the perfect supreme god is the one Jesus has made known to us (cf. John 1.18), whereas the Demiurge is the god of the Old Testament. Between this view and the ordinary Christian vision in which the God of the Old Testament is the one Jesus has made known to us, Ptolemy takes up a middle position. He distinguishes three figures: the perfect all-good god, the imperfect but righteous creator god or Demiurge, and the thoroughly wicked Devil. On this basis, Ptolemy develops a vision of the Old Testament.

The Law of Moses, he argues, is divisible into three main parts, namely the law of god, the supplements by Moses, and the commandments of the elders. The Law of god cannot come from the

<sup>32</sup> Separate edition: G. Quispel, *Polémée, Lettre à Flora: Analyse, texte critique, traduction, commentaire et index grec* (SC 24 bis; Paris, 1966). Cf. also B.A. Pearson, "Use, Authority and Exegesis of Mikra in Gnostic Literature", in Mulder (n. 23) pp. 635-652, esp. pp. 644-645.



perfect all-good god, for the law is imperfect and the imperfect cannot come from the perfect. So it comes from the creator god. In turn, it may be subdivided into three parts, firstly the Decalogue, which contains the pure law of god (that is to say, the imperfect but righteous god), secondly the part that has to be taken only symbolically, for instance, circumcision as circumcision of the heart, and thirdly the part linked with injustice, like the *ius talionis*, 'eye for eye, tooth for tooth'. The second main part, the supplements by Moses, comprises such rules as the right of drawing up a writ of dismissal, of which Jesus said that Moses wrote this commandment because the Jews were so unteachable (cf. Mark 10.1-12). The third main part, the commandment of the elders, refers to such traditions as the Corban, which for religious reasons released one from maintaining one's parents. This was also disputed by Jesus (cf. Mark 7.8-13).

Practically speaking, this evaluation of the Old Testament legislation was generally accepted among Christians, not just Christian Gnostics. Only the theoretical foundation is different; no mainstream Christian would have conceded that the Law comes from a lower god and contains wrong elements.<sup>33</sup>

### 7. *Tricky questions: Pseudo-Caesarius' Ἑρωταποκρίσεις*

It was inevitable that Christians with a background of Greek thinking should be struck by the contradictions and obscurities in the Bible. How did they tackle them? Much evidence of this may be found in the continuous commentaries on biblical books, but there are also works that concentrate on the separate questions; one of these is the four books of Ἑρωταποκρίσεις, questions allegedly put to and answered by Caesarius, the brother of Gregory of Nazianzus. In reality, the work seems to date from the middle of the sixth century but it may incorporate much older material.<sup>34</sup> Again, in order to give an impression of it, we have to confine ourselves to a specimen. In question 135, the disciple seems to hear a discrepancy between state-

<sup>33</sup> Cf. W. Horbury, "Old Testament Interpretation in the Writings of the Church Fathers", in Mulder (n. 23) pp. 727-787, esp. pp. 758-761.

<sup>34</sup> Edition: R. Riedinger, *Pseudo-Kaisarios, Die Erotapokriseis* (Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller; Berlin, 1989). Cf. id., *Pseudo-Kaisarios: Überlieferungsgeschichte und Verfasserfrage* (Byzantinisches Archiv 12; Munich, 1969); W. Lackner, "Beobachtungen zum Wortschatz des Pseudo-Kaisarios", in W. Hörandner—E. Trapp (eds.), *Lexicographica Byzantina: Beiträge zum Symposium zur byzantinischen Lexikographie* (Wien, 1./4.3.1989) (Byzantina Vindobonensia 20; Vienna, 1991), pp. 207-217.

ments of David on the one hand and those of his son Solomon on the other. The question runs as follows:

David thinks meanly of man and disparages him by saying in the eighth Psalm: Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? (Ps. 8.5), and in the thirty-eighth Psalm: Nay every man is in vain (Ps. 38.12),<sup>35</sup> and in the one-hundred-and-forty-third Psalm: Lord, what is man, that thou art made known to him? or the son of man, that thou takest account of him? Man is like to vanity (Ps. 143.3-4). But his son, Solomon, magnifies man and exalts him by saying: Man is valuable and precious (Prov. 20.6). If then he is at variance with his father, how shall the rest of the prophets be in harmony?

Which is answered as follows:

Nothing of this is able to show that the words of these God-revealing men are at variance, provided they are discussed with zeal for knowledge and contemplated attentively without stupid judgement. For action is an entrance to contemplation. Well then, the one sets your nature before the mind, the other the dignity which we have received from the God of the universe to a greater degree than every other creature, since we are made by divine hands. Open the first volume of Moses and you will be instructed concerning both: God took dust of the earth and he formed the man and breathed upon his face the breath of life (Gen. 2.7). In 'he took' and 'he formed', man's dignity may be known, since this is said on account of none of the creatures apart from man only. And in 'dust taken of the earth', we are instructed on the insignificance of our nature, since we are earth and dust, worthless matter that is easy to dissolve.

Two features of this fragment strike the mind. First of all, the approach followed is atomistic, so to speak. Both the question and the answer concentrate on isolated passages, regardless of the immediate context. Thus the first citation, Psalm 8.5, is followed by 'Thou madest him a little less than angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honour; and thou hast set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things under his feet' (Ps. 8.6-7), which, in itself, suffices to take the edge off the objection.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, the assertion that God is said to have 'taken' and 'formed' when creating man alone is flatly contradicted in Gen. 2.19: 'And God formed yet farther out of the earth all the wild beasts of the field, and all the birds of the sky.' Furthermore the technique of refuting is interesting; we

<sup>35</sup> The text follows the reading of MSS. A and S, which omit *ταράσσεται*.

<sup>36</sup> This disregard for context appears already in the New Testament and the Dead Sea Scrolls, cf. the discussion in Gamble (n. 3) pp. 25-27.

recognise an artifice used also in later ages. If an offensive passage cannot be rendered harmless by logical reasoning, the master may try to dispose of it by setting against it one or more passages which do contain the desired statement. As soon, however, as one sees through this, one realises that he is diverting attention from the irritating passage rather than explaining it in a satisfactory way. What about the seriousness of the questions? Of course this should not be evaluated by using our criteria. The modern Bible reader will hardly bother about the question whether Scripture declares man worthless or precious. On the other hand, the discussion of biblical problems has no doubt stimulated critical reflection, and, in fact, many problems are brought up in Pseudo-Caesarius that still challenge the acumen of exegetes.

#### 8. *Pagan readers: the Apocriticus of Macarius Magnes*

As we saw in the section on exegesis, Origen had to parry opinions of outsiders on the darkness during Christ's death on the cross. Such uninvited comments must have been voiced much more often, and Christian exegetes had to cope with them. Therefore it is important to have an idea of the nature of pagan responses to Scripture. No writings of pagan authors on the Bible have come down to us in their original form. Understandably, though unfortunately, Christian Antiquity hardly felt called to transcribe the writings of its attackers. There is one little exception: the unknown author of the treatise *On the Sublime* (Περὶ ὕψους), who lived probably in the first half of the first century A.D. and who, as an independent spirit, was prepared to include non-Greek writers such as Cicero in his discussion, has a citation from Gen. 1.3. Nevertheless, the Church fathers quite frequently refer to pagan opinions on scriptural subjects. In his collection *Biblia Gentium*, Giancarlo Rinaldi offers no less than 715 such statements.<sup>37</sup> Of course, these fragments may have been distorted for apologetic reasons. Yet this danger is not too serious. Since we can study the Church fathers' practice of citing because they regularly quote from pagan texts preserved to us, we know it was usually done

<sup>37</sup> G. Rinaldi, *Biblia Gentium: Primo contributo per un indice delle citazioni, dei riferimenti e delle allusioni alla Bibbia negli autori pagani, greci e latini, di età imperiale. A First Contribution towards an Index of Biblical Quotations, References and Allusions Made by Greek and Latin Heathen Writers of the Roman Imperial Times* (Rome, 1989). Cf. also Gamble (n. 3) pp. 103, 141-142.

with reasonable care; and if a citation is free, this was not done in order to tone down hostile sounds. On the contrary, the patristic authors rather seem to enjoy copying radically anti-Christian passages; the pleasure of refuting these triumphantly is all the greater. In the meantime, this yields us a rich harvest of pagan statements on biblical subjects.

As an example, I present a quotation transmitted in the *Apocriticus*, a work written *c.* 400 by an otherwise unknown Macarius Magnes.<sup>38</sup> It contains a dispute on the Gospel of John, 6.53, which reads:

Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.

This verse has no counterpart in the synoptic gospels. It elicits the following burning comment:

Truly this saying is not merely beast-like and absurd, but is more absurd than any absurdity, and more beast-like than any fashion of a beast, that a man should taste human flesh, and drink the blood of members of the same tribe and race, and that by doing this he should have eternal life. For, tell me, if you do this, what excess of savagery do you introduce into life? .... Rumour does not record—I do not say, this action, but even the mention of this strange and novel deed of impiety. The phantoms of the Furies never revealed this to those who lived in strange ways, nor would the Potidaeans have accepted it unless they had been reduced by a savage hunger. Once the banquet of Thyestes became such, owing to a sister's grief, and the Thracian Tereus took his fill of such food unwillingly. Harpagus was deceived by Astyages when he feasted on the flesh of his dearest, and it was against their desire that all these underwent such a pollution. But no one living in a state of peace prepared such a table in his life; no one learnt from a teacher any knowledge so foul. If you look up Scythia in the records, and go through the Macrobian Ethiopians, and if you career through the ocean girdle round about, you will find men who eat, live, and devour roots; you will hear of men who eat reptiles and feed on mice, but they refrain altogether from human flesh. What then does this saying mean? [Even if there is a mystical meaning hidden in it, yet that does not pardon the outward significance, which places men lower than the beasts. Men have made up strange tales, but nothing so pernicious as this, with which to gull the simple.] Wherefore it seems to me that neither Mark nor Luke nor even Matthew recorded this, because they regarded the saying as not a comely one, but strange and discordant, and far re-

<sup>38</sup> Edition: C. Blondel, Μακαρίου Μάγνητος Ἀποκριτικὸς ἢ Μονογενής. *Macarii Magnetis quae supersunt, ex inedito codice edidit* (Paris, 1876). There is an English translation by T.W. Crafer, *The Apocriticus of Macarius Magnes* (Translations of Christian Literature, Series I: Greek Texts; London and New York, 1919).

moved from civilised life. Even you yourself could scarcely be pleased at reading it, and far less any man who has had the advantage of a liberal education. (trans. T.W. Crafer; the square brackets are his, indicating a summary)

Interestingly, the opponent has checked the synoptic gospels for parallels, and is prepared to make the saying acceptable by searching for a mystical meaning hidden in it. Furthermore, from the evidence of this and similar statements, we may safely conclude that Christian exegetes, when working on their commentaries, were aware of such fierce pagan reactions to biblical passages.

### *Scholarly standard*

As I hope to have shown, the early Christians performed monumental achievements in the field of transmitting, editing, translating and explaining the biblical writings. What, however, about their attitude as *critics* of the text? Here a twofold answer is in order. The Church fathers had an eye for the problems inherent in Scripture. They did not sweep difficulties under the carpet but discussed them in a well-reasoned way. They would not have thought of forbidding the simple faithful to read the Bible. Moreover, the suggestions offered by the patristic exegetes can still render services, and many a biblical scholar of our own times may find the solutions he thought new already present in John Chrysostom, Augustine or, say, the Venerable Bede.

Nevertheless, here we run up against the limitations of patristic Bible scholarship. To the early Christians, Scripture was God's word, firstly the word He spoke to Israel, but at the same time looking ahead to the new and lasting covenant, and then the word spoken in the fullness of time, to the faithful, Jews and also Gentiles. This view of the Bible had two weighty consequences: firstly, as God's word, the Bible could not contain any contradictions, and secondly, the Old Testament was to be read in the light of the New Testament. This aprioristic opinion, the basis of which we can find in the New Testament itself, was shared by all Christians, not only of the first centuries but also of later ages up to the Age of Enlightenment. Only then were eyes opened to the peculiar character of the biblical texts, to the widely different literary genres to which they belonged and to their diverging historical backgrounds. Only then was attention directed to the development of ideas, and an awareness arose that the biblical

authors themselves did not know the whole Bible. Alleged contradictions and absurdities, rendered harmless by allegory in former times, now became explicable by placing them in their particular contexts. Thus the modern critical scholarship of the Bible came into being. The patristic period was innocent of it.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> I am grateful for help received from Jan Bremmer, Alexandra Gaylord-Smith, F.J. Hoogewoud, Gerard Luttikhuisen and Jacques van Ruiten.

## EXAMPLE AND DISCIPLESHIP SOME COMMENTS ON THE BIBLICAL BACKGROUND OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY OF MARTYRDOM

B. Dehandschutter

The reflection on martyrdom occupied more than a marginal place in the intellectual life of the Early Church.<sup>1</sup> In periods of persecution as well as those of *pax*, the theme of suffering for the Christian faith retained its actuality – it became a part of the reflection on the Church as such.<sup>2</sup> There is no need to argue that the Bible played a central role in this early Christian reflection.<sup>3</sup> The Bible could be read and was indeed read as a prophetic or prefigurative “book” on

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of “Early Church” is concentrated in this contribution on the first three centuries. It is evident that reflection on persecution and martyrdom goes far beyond this limitation. For a survey of the earliest materials, see T. Baumeister, *Genese und Entfaltung der altkirchlichen Theologie des Martyriums* (Bern, 1991); comp. Id., *Die Anfänge der Theologie des Martyriums* (MBT 45, Münster, 1980); see also B. Dehandschutter, “Le Martyre de Polycarpe et le développement de la conception du martyre au deuxième siècle”, in E.A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Patristica XVII* (Oxford—New York, 1982), pp. 659-668.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Pamela Bright, “Origenian Understanding of Martyrdom and its Biblical Framework”, in C. Kannengiesser-W.L. Petersen (eds.), *Origen of Alexandria. His World and his Legacy* (Notre Dame, 1988), pp. 180-199, p. 197: “The ecclesiastical implications of martyrdom for the early church can hardly be exaggerated”.

<sup>3</sup> This can be said without denying non-biblical influences on the early Christian thought, be it from philosophical and/or hellenistic origin; cf. in general A.J. Droge and J.D. Tabor, *A Noble Death. Suicide and Martyrdom among Christians and Jews in Antiquity* (San Francisco, 1992) or for specific themes such as the “crucified just” e.g. V. Saxer, “Le ‘juste crucifié’ de Platon à Théodore”, *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 19 (1983), pp. 189-215; *Pères saints et culte chrétien dans l’Église des premiers siècles* (Variorum Collected Studies 1994). But it is not unimportant to realise that the early Christian view has been developed in *confrontation* with the common philosophical (stoic) understanding, see e.g. J.N. Sevenster, “Education or Conversion: Epictetus and the Gospels”, in *Placida Pleiadia. Papers presented to G. Sevenster, Novum Testamentum* 8 (1966), pp. 247-262, p. 255: “Evidently these Stoics consider the way the Christians die too emotional, too uncontrolled. Perhaps they knew something of those testimonies of faith which, according to the Martyria, were made by many Christians. A Stoic does not die like that”. Comp. M. Spanneut, “Epiktet”, *RAC* 5 (1962) cc. 559-681, esp. cc. 631-632, and mainly C. Butterweck, *‘Martyriumssucht’ in der alten Kirche. Zur Darstellung und Deutung frühchristlicher Martyrien* (Tübingen, 1995).

martyrdom.<sup>4</sup> However varied the early Christian martyrological documentation is<sup>5</sup>, biblical inspiration is clearly manifest. On the other hand, the earliest interpretation of the Bible stressed the fundamental martyrological aspects of the text. This is very evident in the commentary on the Book of Daniel by Hippolytus.<sup>6</sup>

It is not our aim to examine every element of the biblical background of the early Christian theology of martyrdom. We shall limit ourselves to some comments on two aspects of its biblical foundation, namely those of model and imitation, or of example and discipleship.

From the earliest times, the idea of example has been an important source for the biblical background of the Christian theology of martyrdom. Biblical "stories" such as 2 and 4 Maccabees, and Daniel in its Jewish-Hellenistic expansion, furnished "models" for Christian behaviour in suffering and persecution.<sup>7</sup> So also did the patriarchs, the persecuted prophets, the suffering Just (Job), a man like Tobias, although their function as a model is not always evident from the biblical text as such.<sup>8</sup> But another aspect of their exemplary function, and, no doubt, a no less important one, is their presence in the literary tradition of *exempla*. Tertullian (*Scorpiace*) and Cyprian (*Ad*

<sup>4</sup> It is beyond our scope to enter into the discussion about the concept or delimitation of the notion of "Bible" or its unity in the Early Church. But a case as 4 Maccabees and the Greek Daniel must make us aware of the problem, cf. in general: *Le Canon des Écritures. Études historiques, exégétiques et systématiques* (Lectio Divina 140, Paris, 1990); L.M. McDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon* (Peabody, 1995); J.T. Lienhard, *The Bible, the Church and Authority: the Canon of the Christian Bible in History and Theology* (Collegeville, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> See our remarks: "Hagiographie et histoire. À propos des Actes et Passions des Martyrs", in M. Lamberigts and P. Van Deun (eds.), *Martyrium in Multidisciplinary Perspective. Memorial Louis Reekmans* (BETL 117, Louvain, 1995), pp. 295-301.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. G. Bardy and M. Lefevre, *Hippolyte. Commentaire sur Daniel* SC 14 (Paris, 1947), pp. 28-39, p. 28: "Dans les jours troublés que traverse l'Église au début du IIIe siècle, le livre de Daniel s'impose à l'attention... il donne plus encore des encouragements et des conseils pour le présent".

<sup>7</sup> See J.W. van Henten, "Zum Einfluß jüdischer Martyrien auf die Literatur des frühen Christentums II. Die Apostolischen Väter", in W. Haase (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt II. Principat*, Bd. 27,1 (Berlin-New York, 1993), pp. 700-723; Id., "The Martyrs as Heroes of the Christian People. Some Remarks on the Continuity between Jewish and Christian Martyrology, with Pagan Analogies", in M. Lamberigts and P. Van Deun, *Martyrium*, pp. 303-322; S. Deléani, "Une typologie du martyre chrétien: la Passion des frères maccabées et de leur mère selon saint Cyprien", in *Figures de l'Ancien Testament chez les Pères* (Cahiers de Biblia Patristica 2) Paris, 1989, pp. 189-213.

<sup>8</sup> For a summary on the study of the relation between Jewish and Christian martyrology, see our "Einleitung", in J.W. van Henten e.a. (ed.), *Die Entstehung der jüdischen Martyrologie* (Leyde, 1989), pp. 5-14.



*Fortunatum*)<sup>9</sup> show that collections of *exempla* influenced the early Christian view on martyrdom from the beginning. The origin of that phenomenon is close at hand, if one reads the 18th and 21st chapter of 4 Maccabees, a writing whose early Christian reception and even “canonical” status is generally acknowledged.<sup>10</sup>

However, the function of those people as *exempla* needs to be looked at more closely. Their exemplary character is not only related to the understanding of martyrdom in the sense that they persevered in persecution and suffering until death. The example of the Old Testament “precursors” implies at the same time more ethical qualities. They are models of *perseverantia* in their “daily” lives, apart from the specific situation of persecution. In other words, they are models of the “martyre quotidien”. *Patientia* is also a quality of the whole life of these “martyrs”.<sup>11</sup> This idea was applied at a very early stage to the Christian martyrs themselves. The story of Polycarp of Smyrna’s martyrdom contains the following remark:

<sup>9</sup> Compare also Cyprian, *Epistula* 58,5-6; and see Christel Butterweck, ‘*Martyriumsucht*’, pp. 179-183; for Tertullian see again D. van Damme, “Gott und die Märtyrer. Überlegungen zu Tertullian, *Scorpiace*”, *FZPT* 27 (1980), pp. 107-119; for Cyprian: M.A. Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible. A Study in Third-century Exegesis* (Tübingen, 1971), pp. 555-611: Cyprian’s biblical figures. The *exemplum*-material has been studied by S. Deléani, “Les exempla bibliques du martyre”, in *Le monde latin ancien et la Bible* (Paris, 1985), pp. 243-260; Ead., “L’utilisation des modèles bibliques du martyre par les écrivains du III<sup>e</sup> siècle”, *ibid.*, pp. 315-338.

<sup>10</sup> Its influence on early Christian martyrological texts has been stressed more than once, see e.g. O. Perler, “Das vierte Makkabäerbuch, Ignatius von Antiochien und die ältesten Märtyrerberichte”, *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* 25 (1949), pp. 47-72 = *Sapientia et Caritas. Gesammelte Aufsätze zum 90. Geburtstag* (Fribourg, 1990), pp. 141-166; S.E. Johnson, “Greek and Jewish Heroes: Fourth Maccabees and the Gospel of Mark”, in *Early Christian Literature and the Classical Intellectual Tradition in honorem R.M. Grant* (*Théologie historique* 53), Paris, 1979, pp. 155-175; we tried elsewhere to qualify this opinion, cf. *Martyrium Polycarpi. Bijdrage tot de studie van de martelaar in het vroege christendom*, proefschrift Leuven, 1977, pp. 231-238; pp. 286-289; but see T. Baumeister, *Anfänge*, pp. 268-270; pp. 286-288; pp. 295-305, and our reaction in *Bijdragen* 45 (1984), pp. 441-442.

<sup>11</sup> The notion of ὑπομονή has been studied thoroughly by M. Spanneut, “Geduld”, *RAC* 9 (1973) 243-294; on *patientia* see also Tertullian’s *De Patientia* and Cyprian’s *De bono patientiae*, and the introduction in J.C. Fredouille, *Tertullien. De la patience*, SC 310 (Paris, 1984), pp. 21-38. On “martyre quotidien” see S. Deléani, *L’utilisation des modèles bibliques*, pp. 327-330. This idea reappears in a different context in the spirituality of the later Fathers, such as Chrysostom, cf. our contribution: “Μηκέτι ὑδροπότει. Some Notes on the Patristic Exegesis of 1 Timothy 5:23”, in *The Ministry of the Word. Essays in Honor of Prof. Dr. Raymond F. Collins, Louvain Studies* 20 (1995), pp. 265-270, in which we refer to the example of Job in its patristic reception.

For because of his perfect *way of life* he was honoured in everything, even before his death (*Mart. Pol.* 13,2).<sup>12</sup>

It could be added that the same ethical understanding appears in several texts on imitation which belong to the fundamental “structure” of every concept of Christian martyrdom. The well-known saying of Matthew 16,24 is an excellent example in this regard:

If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me (New Jerusalem Bible).

As M. Ko Ha Fong demonstrated, the ethical interpretation of this saying is fully present in authors who we would expect to concentrate on the martyrological sense, such as Origen and Cyprian. In her view, Origen is even indebted to Clement of Alexandria since the latter stressed the unification of the idea of imitation (of Christ) with the stoic *apatheia*.<sup>13</sup> If this is correct, we must not forget that a more ethical interpretation of the saying is already given with the Lucan version itself, with the addition: ‘Ἀράτω τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καθ’ ἡμέραν (Luke 9,23).<sup>14</sup>

The interpretation of this New Testament saying can lead us to another qualification. Up until now, we have referred to Old Testament *exempla*. It is striking indeed that at a first glance New Testament

<sup>12</sup> We follow the reading *πρὸ τῆς μαρτυρίας* cf. B. Dehandschutter, *Martyrium Polycarpi. Een literair-kritische studie* (BETL 52, Leuven, 1979), pp. 94-95. The English translation is ours. It is close to Lake's (*The Apostolic Fathers* II, 1913), and Goodspeed's (*The Apostolic Fathers*, 1950); but it can differ considerably, cf. W.R. Schoedel, *The Apostolic Fathers* 5 (London, 1966), p. 68: “for he was adorned with every (power) because of his goodly *way of life* even before his martyrdom”. On the whole comp. G. Buschmann, *Martyrium Polycarpi – eine formkritische Studie. Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Entstehung der Gattung Märtyrerakie* (BZNW 70, Berlin, 1994), pp. 259-260. Some Acts of the Martyrs focus on the comparison of the example with the contemporary martyrs and on the equality of the latter examples and of those who surround them, e.g. the *Passio Montani et Lucii* (16,3-6) where the faith of the mother of Flavian is compared with Abraham's faith and the following exclamation is added: “o matrem inter vetera *exempla* numeranda! o maccabaicam matrem!”; text in F. Dolbeau, “La Passion des saints Lucius et Montanus. Histoire et édition du texte”, *REAug* 29 (1983), pp. 39-82.

<sup>13</sup> Maria Ko Ha Fong, *Crucem tollendo Christum sequi. Untersuchung zum Verständnis eines Logions Jesu in der alten Kirche* (Münster, 1984), pp. 43-50; comp. E. Früchtel, *Origenes. Das Gespräch mit Herakleides und dessen Bischofskollegen über Vater, Sohn und Seele – Die Aufforderung zum Martyrium* (Stuttgart, 1974), p. 120, n. 6; comp. A. van den Hoek, “Clement of Alexandria on Martyrdom”, in E.A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Patristica* XXVI (Louvain, 1993), pp. 324-341. For the theme in Cyprian, cf. together with the reference in n. 9, S. Deléani, *Christum sequi. Étude d'un thème dans l'œuvre de Saint Cyprien* (Paris, 1979), pp. 67-111.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. T. Baumeister, *Anfänge*, p. 115; pp. 136-137.

“models” play less of a role. The literary tradition of *exempla* refers to the apostles quite generally, sometimes to the sufferings of Peter and/or Paul, and the case of Stephen as a real example of martyrdom.<sup>15</sup> However, in the view of the early Christians, the main example is Christ Himself. He is the perfect model of every kind of martyrdom; all models come together in Him. Moreover, S. Deléani has shown that, in the case of the Old Testament examples, the christological interpretation not only allowed them to function as models but gave them the character of prefiguration.<sup>16</sup> From Abel onwards, every *exemplum* is a prefiguration of Christ. As a consequence, early Christian hagiography will stress the *imitatio Christi*.<sup>17</sup> If Christ is the recapitulation of the examples of old, his passion is the suffering that contains the acts of the martyrs of all times, including the future ones. He is the One who gave the good testimony before Pontius Pilate (1 Timothy 6,13), and all witnesses = martyrs continue to participate in that testimony to truth. In some Acts of the Martyrs this testimony has developed again into complete discussions about the true faith.<sup>18</sup>

There is no doubt that the New Testament texts about imitation and discipleship<sup>19</sup> exercised considerable influence on the views of martyrdom in the Early Church. We are confronted not only with a phenomenon of typology or prefiguration but also of actualisation.

<sup>15</sup> See S. Deléani, “Les exempla”, p. 259; the testimonies on Peter are summarised by R.J. Bauckham, “The Martyrdom of Peter in Early Christian Literature”, in ANRW II. Principat, Bd 26,1 (Berlin, 1992) 539-595; C. Grappe, “Du témoin pleureur de la Passion au martyr: images de Pierre aux deux premiers siècles”, in *Figures du Nouveau Testament chez les Pères* (Strasbourg, 1991), pp. 53-106. On Paul: H.W. Tarja, *The Martyrdom of St. Paul* (WUNT 2 R. 67, Tübingen, 1994), pp. 166-174.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. S. Deléani, “L’utilisation des modèles bibliques”, pp. 330-336; also M. Dulaey, “Joseph le patriarche, figure du Christ”, in *Figures de l’Ancien Testament chez les Pères* (Strasbourg, 1989), pp. 83-105.

<sup>17</sup> This imitation has been applied in *martyria* and *passiones* as divergent as *Martyrium Jacobi* (Eus. *H.E.* II, 23,10-18; comp. IV,22,4), *Martyrium Lugdunensium* 1,10; 1,23; 1,30; 1,41; 2,2; *Passio Perpetuae* 18,9; *Passio Montani et Lucii*; cf. V. Saxer, *Bible et hagiographie. Textes et thèmes bibliques dans les Actes des martyrs authentiques des premiers siècles* (Bern, 1986), pp. 220-231. It is impossible to elaborate here on the Ignatian theme of imitation, cf. T. Baumeister, *Anfänge*, pp. 277-282.

<sup>18</sup> It is striking that these discussions often continue the confrontation with the problem of idolatry, as was already the case in texts such as the Books of the Maccabees and Daniel. Origen’s *Exhortation* makes clear how important this question was for the Christian theology of martyrdom (cf. ch. 5-10). The same is true for Cyprian’s *Ad Fortunatum*. It might indicate that the use of *exempla* is to be considered as dependent on a real threat of idolatry, cf. also V. Saxer, *Bible et hagiographie*, pp. 205-212.

<sup>19</sup> See in general W. Horbury-B. McNeil, *Suffering and Martyrdom in the New Testament. Studies presented to G.M. Styler* (Cambridge, 1981).

This becomes evident in the example of the Mission discourse of Matthew 10. It was possible to read this text again and again in an actualising way, focussing mainly on the passages on the fate of the disciples (vv. 16-25), the call for bold confession (vv. 26-33), and the verses on the demanding character of discipleship (vv. 34-39).<sup>20</sup> As the same themes reappear in the synoptic apocalyptic discourses, it became easy to understand the situation of persecution in one's own time as the fulfilment of the prediction of Matthew 24,9:

Then you will be handed over to be tortured and put to death; and you will be hated by all nations on account of my name (New Jerusalem Bible).

The Early Church read these texts carefully. Origen's *Exhortation to Martyrdom* ch. 34-39 seems to be a running commentary on Matthew 10. The great Alexandrian combines Matthew 10,17-23 with Luke 12,11-12 and 21,14-19, and compares Mark 13,11-13, so that the one text is read through the other.<sup>21</sup> Origen brings them together in the light of his own view about martyrdom.<sup>22</sup> The words are spoken to the apostles only, not to everyone. Those who wish to arrive at the act of martyrdom have first to *live* the life of an apostle. Not everybody is able to do so, and, as a consequence, not able to live the life of a martyr. The *ἀγών* of Christian life has to be fought<sup>23</sup>, before the *τελείωσις* is possible. In this way, the life of the martyr is the life of a witness. The New Testament passages on witnessing are continuously read together with those on suffering. In the second book of the *Commentary on John*, Origen summarises this as follows:

Now everyone who testifies to the truth, whether he presents his testimony in words or deeds or in whatever way, would correctly be called a "witness" (μάρτυς). But it is already currently the custom of the brotherhood, since they have been amazed at the disposition of those who have struggled to death for truth or courage, to give the name "witnesses"

<sup>20</sup> Of course the question of the flight in persecution was much debated at the occasion of Matthew 10,23, cf. Tertullian, *De fuga in persecutione*; and *Martyrium Agapès* 1,2.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. E. Früchtel, *Origenes*, pp. 103-110; comp. however J.W. Trigg, *Origen. Bible and Philosophy in the Third Century Church* (London, 1985) who understands the *Exhortation* in the first place as a model of Christian Platonism (p. 164); comp. also J.A. McGuckin, "Martyr Devotion in the Alexandrian School: Origen to Athanasius", in D. Wood (ed.), *Martyrs and Martyrologies* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 35-45.

<sup>22</sup> In general see P. Hartmann, "Origène et la théologie du martyre d'après le *Protreptikos* de 235", *ETL* 34 (1958), pp. 773-824; more recently P. Bright, *art.cit.* (note 2); J.A. McGuckin, *art.cit.*

<sup>23</sup> Cf. B. Dehandschutter, *Martyrium Polycarpi. Bijdragen*, pp. 226-238.

(μάρτυρας ὠνόμασαν) in a special sense only to those who have borne witness to the mystery of godliness by the pouring out of their own blood, although the Saviour gives the name “witness” to every one who bears witness to the things proclaimed about himself (210).<sup>24</sup>

Origen never fails to stress the “cross-references” between the life of Christ and the life of the martyr. He therefore often connects the logion on the bearing of the cross as imitation, Matthew 16,24 with Galatians 2,20: *not I live but Christ lives in me*, a verse following on the theme of the συνσταυροῦμαι with Christ.<sup>25</sup> Ambrose and Proctetus, to whom the *Exhortatio* is devoted, are invited to make up what is still lacking in the suffering of Christ (Col. 1,24, cf. *Exhortatio* 36). This idea of participation in Christ’s passion through the martyr’s life is seemingly the basis of the frequent theme in the early Christian *martyria* of the presence of Christ *in* the martyr.<sup>26</sup>

### Conclusion

Much could be said about other themes that also have their own biblical origin, such as martyrdom as the eschatological struggle, as baptism and election, etc.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, our brief considerations allow a conclusion, which is not without importance for understanding the early Christian concept of martyrdom as a whole: the biblical “preparation” of the theology of martyrdom in the form of the *exempla* and of imitation in discipleship stresses the unity of life and death of the martyr. If martyrdom is the search for perfection, both in a literal and a figurative sense, it cannot be said that it was only from the fourth century onwards that Christian theology transformed the view on martyrdom into a view on spiritual life or ἄσκησις. That theology was already present in the earliest testimonies concerning martyrdom, and, as a matter of fact, developed before the “Monk” became the successor of the “Martyr”.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Translation by R.E. Heine, *Origen. Commentary on the Gospel according to John, Books 1-10* (Washington, 1989), p. 151; comp. C. Blanc, *Origène. Commentaire sur Saint Jean SC 120* (Paris, 1966), p. 350. See also Origen, *Exhortatio* 16; *In Jeremiam XIV*, 7, cf. P. Husson-P. Nautin, *Origène. Homélie sur Jérémie SC 238* (Paris, 1977), pp. 80-81.

<sup>25</sup> See Maria Ko Ha Fong, *Crucem tollendo*, pp. 58-60.

<sup>26</sup> See my remarks in “Le martyre de Polycarpe”, 644 and the texts referred to; also V. Saxer, *Bible et Hagiographie*, pp. 220-223.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. V. Saxer, *Bible et Hagiographie*, pp. 212-214.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. E.E. Malone, *The Monk and the Martyr. The Monk as the Successor of the Martyr* (Washington, 1950).

# DIE ROLLE DER BIBEL IN DEN ASKETISCHEN KREISEN DES VIERTEN UND FÜNFTEN JAHRHUNDERTS

G. Bartelink

In der Frühzeit des Mönchtums waren nicht nur in den Klöstern Bibeltexte vorhanden, sondern auch allein wohnende Asketen verfügten oft über ein Psalterium oder ein Evangelarium, das monastische Vademecum par excellence. Typisch dafür ist eine berühmte Erzählung über einen Mönch, welcher die Aufforderung, allem irdischen Besitz zu entsagen, auf so extreme Weise in die Praxis umsetzte, dass er sogar sein Evangelarium zu Geld machte, um den Bedürftigen zu helfen. Die älteste Form findet sich im *Practicus* des Evagrius, wo der Mönch anonym bleibt<sup>1</sup>:

Ein Bruder besass nur ein Evangelarium. Er verkaufte es und verwendete den Ertrag, um Hungrige zu ernähren. Dabei sprach er dieses denkwürdige Wort: 'Ich habe den Logos selbst (Logos ist hier das Büchlein, zu gleicher Zeit aber spielt die Bedeutung "der Herr" auf dem Hintergrund mit) verkauft, der mir sagte: Verkaufe was du besitzt und gib den Ertrag den Armen.' (Matth. 19,21).

Die Pointe ist, dass es sein einziger und letzter Besitz ist und dass er jetzt so weit in der Askese fortgeschritten ist, dass er das unentbehrliche Büchlein entbehren kann. Man hat glaubhaft zu machen gewusst, dass Evagrius für diese Anekdote aus dem *Leben des Serapion Sindonites* geschöpft hat, dem Palladius Abschnitt 37 der *Historia Lausiaca* gewidmet hat. In der *Historia Lausiaca* findet sich übrigens eine derartige Erzählung<sup>2</sup>, wobei ausserdem die Pointe darin liegt, dass der Mönch wie durch eine Art Meisterstück beweist, dass er das asketische Handwerk beherrscht. Ein anonymen Mönch aus Ancyra antwortete, nachdem er ein ihm geschenktes Evangelienbuch verkauft hatte, denjenigen, die darüber eine abschätzige Bemerkung machten:

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<sup>1</sup> 77; vgl. die Ausgabe von A. Guillaumont, SC 171, S. 704-705. Die Stelle bei Evagrius wird zitiert von Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 4,23 (PG 67,517B). Man sehe auch C. Butler, *The Lausiaca History of Palladius* I, Cambridge 1898, S. 98-99.

<sup>2</sup> c. 68. Für den Verzicht auf Bücher siehe auch *Apophthegmata Patrum*, Theodorus von Pherme 1 (PG 65,188A) und Serapion 2 (ibid., 416C).

Wie kann ich meinen Meister davon überzeugen, dass ich mir seine *Techne* (Fertigkeiten) auf dem Gebiete der Entsagung zu eigen gemacht habe, wenn ich nicht ihn selbst verkaufe, um die *Techne* in die Praxis umzusetzen?

In den *Apophthegmata* finden wir ebenfalls diese Geschichte, jetzt von dem Eremiten Bessarion. Auch in der langen Rezension der *Historia Lausiaca* will dieser Mönch nur dem Wort des Evangeliums gehorchen<sup>3</sup>:

Als er unterwegs einen armen Mann gesehen hatte, eilte er zum Marktplatz, wo er nach kurzer Zeit das Evangeliarium zu verkaufen wusste. Einige Tage später fragte ihn sein Schüler, Abba Doulas: 'Was ist mit dem Büchlein passiert, Abba?' Der alte Mönch antwortete, halb im Ernst, halb im Scherz: 'Sei nicht betrübt, Bruder. Um uns dort oben (nämlich im Himmel) voller Zuversicht melden zu können, habe ich, aus Gehorsam, das Buch selbst verkauft, das mir immer sagte: Verkaufe was du besitzt und gib den Ertrag den Armen.'

Die Asketen versuchen die Worte des Evangeliums soviel wie möglich in die Praxis umzusetzen. So nehmen sie ernst, was eigentlich jeder Christ tun sollte. Die Gründer des Mönchtums entnehmen dem Evangelium die Basistexte, von denen das Mönchtum ausgeht. Eben in der Bibel finden sie ideale Modelle für das monastische Leben. Von Anfang an finden sie da auch Gebets- und Meditationstexte, sowohl für jeden einzelnen als für die Gemeinschaft.

Aus den *Apophthegmata* geht hervor, dass in der Skete-Wüste, wo Gruppen von Asketen zwar getrennt, aber doch ziemlich nahe beieinander lebten, Bibeltexte vorhanden waren. Wir lesen, dass Abba Gelasius über einen Bibelkodex aus Pergament verfügte, der das ganze Alte und Neue Testament enthielt<sup>4</sup>. Theodorus von Pherme hatte in seiner Zelle drei schöne Bücher<sup>5</sup>, die für ihn und seine Mitbrüder sehr heilsam waren. Wahrscheinlich handelt es sich um Bücher, die bei dem wöchentlichen liturgischen Gottesdienst verwendet wurden und als solche allgemeiner Besitz der gesamten Gruppe der Mönche waren. Sie besaßen durch ihr Material und gepflegte Kalligraphie einen nicht geringen Wert und waren nach den *Apophthegmata* auch von Dieben begehrte Objekte<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> c. 116 (PG 34,1220CD; vgl. PL 73,1198CD).

<sup>4</sup> PG 65,145CD (βιβλίον ἐν δέρμασιν).

<sup>5</sup> PG 65,188A (τρία βιβλία καλὰ).

<sup>6</sup> Vgl. Theodorus von Pherme 29 (PG 65,196AB); Ammoës 5 (PG 65,128AB).

Abba Ammoës erwähnt ebenfalls Pergamentbücher, welche von einigen Mönchen in ihrer Zelle aufgehoben wurden<sup>7</sup>. Weiter kursierten Büchlein, welche einen Teil der Schrift, wie den Psalter oder die Paulusbriefe enthielten, wobei an Texte für den persönlichen Gebrauch zu denken ist<sup>8</sup>. Wie es um die Kunst des Lesens und Schreibens im frühen Mönchtum bestellt war, ist nicht leicht einigermaßen genau festzustellen, aber von lesenden und schreibenden Mönchen ist in unseren Texten nicht selten die Rede. Das Kopieren von Texten wird von Palladius in seiner *Historia Lausiaca* einige Male als eine Form asketischer Arbeit bezeichnet (ἄσκησις γραφική)<sup>9</sup>. Für einige war es ein Mittel, um ihren Unterhalt zu bestreiten<sup>10</sup>. Evagrius Ponticus war eine Zeitlang als Kalligraph tätig.

In mancher Erzählung werden beiläufig sich in Klöstern befindende Bibelbücher erwähnt, wobei wahrscheinlich von den meistgelesenen Teilen der Schrift für die Bedürfnisse der Gemeinschaft oft mehrere Exemplare zur Verfügung standen. Nach der *Vita Danielis Stylitae* 3 hatte man in einem syrischen Kloster in der Kapelle beim Altar Bücher hingelegt für jeden, der sie einsehen möchte. Es waren gewiss grossenteils Bibelbücher, welche so auch unmittelbar für die Liturgiefeier vorhanden waren. Ein fünfjähriger Knabe wurde von seinen Eltern nach einem Kloster in der Nähe von Samosata geführt. Als der Abt nach dem Namen des Knaben fragte, nannten die Eltern den Namen, den sie ihm bei seiner Geburt gegeben hatten. Darauf sagte der Abt: "Er wird anders heissen und den Namen tragen, den der Herr mir offenbart." Er sagte dem Jungen auf syrisch: "Hole mir ein Buch vom Tisch." Es ist in den Koenobien gebräuchlich, notiert der Autor hierzu, dass man beim Altare eine grosse Zahl verschiedener Bücher hingelegt hat. Als der Knabe mit dem Buch Daniel zurückkam, beschloss der Abt: "Er wird Daniel heissen." In diesem Text verdient es Beachtung, dass das Bibelbuch als Orakel fungiert. Es ist eine Variante der sogenannten *sortes biblicae*, auf gut Glück gezeigte Bibeltexte als Schicksalsbestimmungen, eine christianisierte Fortsetzung einer profanen Tradition<sup>11</sup>.

In diesem Zusammenhang ist auch das Schwören auf die Bibel zu

<sup>7</sup> PG 65,128AB.

<sup>8</sup> PG 65,413D-416C.

<sup>9</sup> Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 32,12; 38,10; 45,3.

<sup>10</sup> Wahrscheinlich kopierten sie vor allem Bibeltexte: PG 65,132BC (Abraham), PG 65,295D-298A (Marcus, Schüler des Silvanus); F. Nau, *ROC* 18, S. 143.

<sup>11</sup> Über die *sortes*: P. Courcelle, "L'enfant et les 'sorts bibliques'", *Vigiliae Christianae* 7 (1953), S. 194-220.



erwähnen. Wir lesen zum Beispiel in der *Historia Lausiaca*<sup>12</sup>, dass der Mönch Cronius, um die Wahrheit einer Mitteilung zu bekräftigen, auf ein Evangelium schwört, das zu diesem Zweck inmitten der versammelten Klostersgemeinschaft hingelegt worden ist.

*Die Schrift ist die Grundlage für das asketische Leben. Sie genügt allein*

In manchem Text heisst es, die Schrift sei die Grundlage für das asketische Leben. Antonius begann seine Ansprache an die Mönche mit der Bemerkung, dass die Schrift genüge. In ihr könne man alles finden, was man brauche. Seine eigenen Worte seien eigentlich nicht mehr als eine Zugabe. Dass die Schrift das ganze Leben eines Mönches bestimmen muss, lehrt uns auch ein dem Antonius zugeschriebenes *Apophthegma*: „Sorge dafür, dass du für alles was du hörst oder sagst über ein Zeugnis aus der heiligen Schrift verfügst“<sup>13</sup>. So fing auch oft der einem jungen Schüler gegebene Unterricht an. Hypatius, der erste Abt des Klosters Rufiniana, ein geschätzter geistlicher Führer, macht ebenfalls eine derartige, bereits traditionell gewordene Bemerkung: „Was auch immer ihr mich fragt, ihr könnt es in der von Gott inspirierten Schrift finden“<sup>14</sup>. In seiner langen Rede<sup>15</sup> (ein bewusstes Gegenstück zu jener des Antonius) bildet eine Aneinanderreihung von Bibelziten die feste Grundlage seiner Darlegung, die bisweilen zu einem Bibelzento wird. Ob es sich um die Notwendigkeit des Gebets oder um die der Demut zuzuerkennende Priorität handelt, die Schrift hat für Hypatius das letzte Wort.

Seit der *Vita Antonii* sind Matth. 19,21 und 16,24 Basistexte für das Mönchtum gewesen (daneben, zum Beispiel bei Augustinus und Cassianus, auch Act. Ap. 4,32 und 34-35: die ideale älteste Christengemeinde in Jerusalem). Es braucht daher auch nicht zu wundern, dass der monastische Sprachgebrauch einen starken biblischen Einschlag aufweist, wie zum Beispiel Lorie dargelegt hat<sup>16</sup>. Bisweilen

<sup>12</sup> 21,5.

<sup>13</sup> Antonius 3, *Apophthegmata* (PG 65,76C).

<sup>14</sup> Callinicus, *Vita Hypatii*, Prol. 13 (SC 177, S. 70).

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, c. 24 (SC 177, S. 147ss.).

<sup>16</sup> L.Th. Lorie, *Spiritual Terminology in the Latin Translations of the Vita Antonii*. With Reference to fourth and fifth Century monastic Literature (Latinitas Christianorum Primaeva 11), Nijmegen, 1955; vgl. B. Steidle, „Homo Dei Antonius. Zum Bild des ‘Mann Gottes’ im alten Mönchtum“, in: *Studia Anselmiana* 38 (Rom, 1956), S. 148-200.

verteidigt der Verfasser einer monastischen Schrift seine schlichte Sprache mit einem Hinweis auf die Bibelsprache. Viele Mönche waren ungebildet. Ihr Horizont blieb nahezu ganz auf die Bibel beschränkt. In der anfangs grossenteils oralen Kultur des Mönchtums lernten sie schon in ihrer Lehrzeit Bibeltexte auswendig und hörten sie—wenn sie wenigstens in Gruppen zusammenwohnten—Bibeltexte vorlesen und singen. Die Bibel war ihre tägliche Nahrung. Sie waren ganz davon durchdrungen. Das auswendig Kennen von Schrifttexten führt leicht über Wortassoziationen zum Herstellen von Zusammenhängen mit anderen Schriften. Cassianus signalisierte bei den Mönchen eine Art Meditation, wobei ein Text einen anderen suggeriert: “So rollt die Seele von Psalm zu Psalm, springt sie von dem Evangelium hin zu Paulus und eilt sie weiter zu den Propheten” (*Coll.* 10,13).

Man unterliess nicht, Mönche, die in der profanen Literatur ausgebildet waren, darauf hinzuweisen, dass von Texten ausserhalb der Bibel Gefahren drohen konnten. Die profane Literatur gehöre zum Gebiete, das man bei der *fuga mundi* hinter sich gelassen hatte. Die Gründer der Häresien seien nicht durch die Bibel inspiriert, sondern durch die heidnische Philosophie infiziert worden. So rief Cyrillus von Scythopolis in einer anti-origenistischen Tirade aus:

Welche Hölle hat die Lehren (näml. der Origenisten) ausgespien? Nicht von ihm, der durch die Propheten und Apostel gesprochen hat, haben sie das gelernt. Das verhüte Gott. Nein, Pythagoras, Platon, Origenes, Evagrius und Didymus (d.h. den profanen Philosophen und den von diesen beeinflussten christlichen Autoren) haben sie diese abscheulichen gotteslästerlichen Lehren entnommen<sup>17</sup>.

### *Die biblischen Vorbilder*

In den Lebensbeschreibungen werden die asketischen Heiligen aus der Spätantike oft mit einem breiten Spektrum von biblischen Vorbildern assoziiert. Nicht nur gibt der Vergleich mit den grossen Gestalten des Alten und Neuen Testaments dem Dargestellten einen Heiligenschein, sondern er suggeriert ebenfalls die Kontinuität der geistlichen Gaben, auch in der postbiblischen Zeit, und betont durch den Hinweis auf biblische Analogien die Zuverlässigkeit der beschriebenen ausserordentlichen Ereignisse. So will der anonyme Verfasser

<sup>17</sup> *Vita Cyriaci*, Ausg. E. Schwartz, S. 230,10ff.

im Prolog der *Historia monachorum in Aegypto* zeigen, dass auch noch zu seiner Zeit (um 400) der Heiland durch die Väter in der Wüste wiederum bewirkt, was er durch die Propheten und die Apostel bewirkte, "denn derselbe Herr bewirkt jetzt und immer alles bei den Menschen"<sup>18</sup>.

Schon in seinem *Leben des Antonius* hat Athanasius immer wieder durch biblische Anspielungen Signale gegeben, wie wir die Gestalt des Antonius sehen müssen. Aus einem Mosaik von Einzelheiten wird somit eine Gestalt für uns sichtbar, welche Aspekte einer prophetischen, evangelischen und apostolischen Lebensweise in sich zusammenfasst. Das wird durch bisweilen subtile Hinweise auf Moses, vorbildlich als einen biblischen Führer in der Wüste, auf Elia, der sich auch in der Wüste aufhielt, und auf Job, Zielscheibe der Versuchung durch Satan, suggeriert<sup>19</sup>. Selbstverständlich stand daneben die *imitatio Christi* im Mittelpunkt.

Die biblischen Heroen fungieren als Wegweiser in der asketischen Welt. Dabei ist der Mönch frei, seiner persönlichen Zuneigung zu folgen, wie das folgende *Apophthegma* illustriert<sup>20</sup>:

Jemand fragte Abba Nisterus: 'Welches gute Werk soll ich tun?' Er antwortete mit der Gegenfrage: 'Sind nicht alle Handlungen gleich? Die Schrift sagt, dass Abraham gastfreundlich war<sup>21</sup> und Gott war mit ihm. Elia suchte den inneren Frieden<sup>22</sup> und Gott war mit ihm. David war demütig<sup>23</sup> und Gott war mit ihm. Tue also, was du siehst, dass dein Herz verlangt in Gottes Geist und bewache dein Herz'<sup>24</sup>.

Bibelzitate können als *sigillum veri* dienen. Das asketische Leben wird durch eine Berufung auf Schrifttexte legitimiert, und zwar von Anfang an. Seit der radikalen Bekehrung mittels als persönliche Orakel interpretierter Evangelientexte spielen Bibelzitate in der *Vita Antonii* eben in wesentlichen Momenten eine Rolle. Die wichtigsten Elemente des asketischen Lebens—wie Gebet, Schriftmeditation, Beschäftigung mit Handwerk—werden mit Bibeltexten legitimiert. Aus demselben Grund werden in den *Apophthegmata* wesentliche, an die Wüstenväter gestellte Fragen nicht selten mit Bibelziten oder An-

<sup>18</sup> *Hist. monach. in Aegypto*, Prolog 13.

<sup>19</sup> Man sehe hierfür: L'exemple des grandes figures de l'Ancien Testament, in: *Athanasie d'Alexandrie, Vie d'Antoine* SC 400 (Paris, 1994), S. 49-52.

<sup>20</sup> Nisterus 2 (PG 65,305D-308A); vgl. Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 14,4.

<sup>21</sup> Gen. 18.

<sup>22</sup> 1 Kön. 17,5.

<sup>23</sup> 1 Sam. 18,23.

<sup>24</sup> Sprüche 4,23.

spielungen auf die Schrift beantwortet. Auch in dem um 382 in Rom lebenden Kreis aristokratischer Frauen um Paula und Marcella, dessen geistlicher Führer Hieronymus einige Zeit war, finden wir neben der engen Verbindung zwischen asketischem Leben und *lectio divina*, auch die Legitimierung des asketischen Lebens durch die Schrift. So verwendete Hieronymus Canticumtexte als Grundlage für seine Betrachtungen über die Virginität und entnahm er auch den Paulusbriefen dafür Argumente<sup>25</sup>.

### *Die zentrale Stellung der Psalmen*

Unter den Bibeltexten nehmen die Psalmen als Gebets- und Meditationstext eine zentrale Stellung ein. Von Anfang an wurde die Kenntnis der Psalmen als notwendig betrachtet für jeden, der sich dem vollkommenen Leben widmete. In seine Regel für das mehr strukturierte zönotische Leben nahm Pachomius bereits die Bestimmung auf, dass niemand im Kloster bleiben dürfte, der nicht zumindest den Psalter und das Neue Testament auswendig kannte<sup>26</sup>. Da weitaus die meisten Mönche in den pachomianischen Klöstern nur das Koptische beherrschten, muss es schon früh eine koptische Bibelübersetzung gegeben haben. Forschungen haben tatsächlich ausgewiesen, dass es bereits in der ersten Hälfte des vierten Jahrhunderts eine nahezu vollständige sahidisch-koptische Übersetzung der Bibel gab<sup>27</sup>.

Die Psalmen wurden nicht nur gemurmelt, sondern auch gesungen (Psalmodie). "Wenn zu bestimmten Zeiten in den Mönchssiedlungen in der Wüste die Psalmmelodien klingen", sagt Athanasius, "scheint die ideale Stadt hier auf Erden Wirklichkeit geworden zu sein"<sup>28</sup>. Ein ähnlicher Gedanke findet sich bei Palladius, der über die Mönche in der nitrischen Wüste schreibt:

Und tatsächlich, wenn jemand um die neunte Stunde (die Stunde der Mahlzeit) sich dort aufhält, kann er den göttlichen Psalmgesang hören,

<sup>25</sup> Vgl. z. B. Hieronymus, *Ep.* 22 (ad Eustochium). Über die Zitate aus den Paulusbriefen: L.J. van der Lof, "L'apôtre Paul dans les lettres de saint Jérôme", *NT* 19 (1977), S. 150ff.

<sup>26</sup> Nach Palladius (*Hist. Laus.* 32,12) lernten die tabennisiotischen Mönche alle Bücher der Schrift auswendig. Vgl. R.T. Meyer, "Palladius and the Study of Scripture", in: *Studia Patristica* 10 (Berlin, 1970), S. 384-385.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. C. Butler, *The Lausiac History* II (Cambridge, 1904), S. 211, Anm. 58.

<sup>28</sup> Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 44,2-4 (SC 400, S. 254).

der aus jeder Zelle aufklingt und sich vorstellen, er sei hoch drüben im Paradies<sup>29</sup>.

Der Gesang der Psalmen verdrängte selbst die gebräuchlichen Arbeitslieder. Hieronymus erwähnt singende Mönche in der Nähe von Bethlehem, die mit der Ernte beschäftigt sind und die üblichen Arbeitslieder gegen Psalmen umgetauscht haben<sup>30</sup>.

Ein Mönch soll den Psalter wortwörtlich auswendig kennen, sagt Hieronymus<sup>31</sup>. In seinem Elogium auf Paula, die um 400 das Frauenkloster zu Bethlehem leitete, sagt er, dass sie selbst die Psalmen auswendig kannte und nicht zuließ, dass eine ihrer Schwestern diese nicht kannte und nicht jeden Tag eine Schriftstelle auswendig lerne<sup>32</sup>. Der Wüstenvater Antonius prägte sich alle Schriftworte, die er hörte, ein<sup>33</sup>. Der syrische Mönch Julianus, der pro Woche nur eine frugale Mahlzeit mit ein wenig Salz und Wasser zu sich nahm, erfreute sich nach Theodoretus von Cyrus geistlicher Nahrung (der Autor verwendet hier das bekannte Wortspiel τροφή-τροφή):

Das Rezitieren der Psalmen von David und der ununterbrochene Kontakt mit Gott waren für ihn ein üppig gedeckter Tisch, an dem er sich fortwährend gütlich tat ohne gesättigt zu werden<sup>34</sup>.

Das auswendig Kennen der Schrift konnte einen charismatischen Charakter haben. Ein Pneumatiker war bisweilen auf wunderbare Weise, selbst ohne lesen zu können und ohne Lehrer, durch göttliche Inspiration mit der Schrift vertraut. Das wunderbare Gedächtnis und

<sup>29</sup> Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 7,5; vgl. auch *ibid.* 43,2 (der Psalmen singende Mönch Adolius). Cf. A. Davril, *La Psalmodie chez les pères du désert, Collectanea Cisterciensia* 49 (1987), S. 132-139.

<sup>30</sup> Hieronymus, *Ep.* 45,11 (ad Marcellam) *Sudans messor psalmis se avocat et curva attondens vitem falce vinitor aliquid Davidicum canit.*

<sup>31</sup> Hieronymus, *Ep.* 125,11 (ad Rusticum) *Discatur psalterium ad verbum; Ep.* 107,4 (ad Laetam: über ihre jugendliche Tochter) *psalmis dulcibus imbuatur.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ep.* 108,20.36; vgl. *Ep.* 107,9; Cyrillus von Scythopolis, *Vita Sabae* 18 und 51. Cf. D. Gorce, *La lectio divina. I Saint Jérôme et la lecture sacrée dans le milieu ascétique romain* (Paris, 1926); Th. Klauser, *Art. Auswendiglernen*, *RAC* 1, Sp. 1030-1038; H. Dörries, "Die Bibel im ältesten Mönchtum", *Theol. Lit. Z.* 73 (1947), Sp. 215-222; auch in: *Wort und Stunde I*, *Gesammelte Studien zur Kirchengeschichte des 4. Jhts.* (Göttingen, 1966), S. 145ff.; R.T. Meyer, "Lectio divina in Palladius", in: *Kuriakon*, *Festschrift Johannes Quasten II*, ed. P. Granfield und J.A. Jungmann (Münster, 1970), S. 580-584.

<sup>33</sup> Athanasius, *Vita Antonii* 3 (SC 400, S. 138). Vgl. R. Reitzenstein, *Historia monachorum und Historia Lausiaca*. Eine Studie zur Geschichte des Mönchtums und der frühchristlichen Begriffe Gnostiker und Pneumatiker (Göttingen, 1916), S. 160-164.

<sup>34</sup> Theodoretus van Cyrus, *Hist. religiosa* 2,2.

die wunderbaren Kenntnisse waren bei einigen Auserwählten mit einem visionären Interpretationsvermögen verbunden.

### *Schrifterklärung*

Palladius sagt, dass der Mönch Paphnutius das Charisma besass, das Alte und das Neue Testament zu kennen. Er interpretierte beide *μὴ ἀναγνοῦς γραφάς*. Wie soll man hier *γραφάς* deuten? Ist es die Schrift oder sind es generell geschriebene Texte (Paphnutius ist ja ein ungebildeter Mann)? Oder handelt es sich hier um exegetische Texte? Dann ist der Sinn der, dass er die Schrift erklärt, ohne die exegetische Tradition zu kennen<sup>35</sup>. In den *Apophthegmata* ist mehrmals von charismatischer Bibelinterpretation die Rede<sup>36</sup>. Bisweilen offenbart ein Engel oder Prophet, zu Hilfe gerufen oder nicht, einem Mönch den Sinn einer Bibelstelle<sup>37</sup>.

Ein grosser Teil der Mönche war im vierten und fünften Jahrhundert ungebildet. Sie kannten die Bibel nur in der Volkssprache. Für die Erklärung der Texte waren sie angewiesen auf dasjenige, was ältere Asketen in ihrer Umgebung oder eigene Betrachtungen sie lehrten. Wenn sie in Gruppen lebten und imstande waren, regelmässig liturgischen Gottesdiensten beizuwohnen, dann werden Homilien, in denen meistens biblische Themen aus den vorgelesenen Texten behandelt wurden, eine wichtige Quelle der Bibelkenntnisse gewesen sein. Ungebildete, einfache Mönche waren am meisten geneigt, die Bibel wörtlich aufzufassen. Wir wissen, dass die anthropomorphistische Bibelerklärung, wobei die Beschreibungen der Gotteserscheinungen im Alten Testament wörtlich genommen wurden, um 385-390 in ganz Ägypten und, wie die Texte erkennen lassen, namentlich in den Zellen und Klöstern der Scete-Wüste stark vertreten war. In den *Collationes*<sup>38</sup> des Cassianus lesen wir, dass Bischof Theophilus von Alexandrien in einem Osterbrief die *inepta anthropomorphitarum haeresis* abwies. Bei den Mönchen jedoch, deren Auffassungen Cassianus als *simplicitatis error* bezeichnete, fand er wenig Gehör. Dass

<sup>35</sup> Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 47,3.

<sup>36</sup> Siehe Nau, *ROC* 18, S. 138, Apophth. N 360,362 und 363. Vgl. H. Dörries, in: *Wort und Stunde* 1, S. 271; G.E. Gould, A Note on the Apophthegmata, *JTS* 37 (1986), S. 133-138.

<sup>37</sup> Siehe N 314 (Engel); Antonius 26 (PG 65,84C: Gott sendet Moses). Vgl. *Hist. monach. in Aegypto* 2,7.

<sup>38</sup> Cassianus, *Coll.* 10,2.

Gott eine menschliche Gestalt hatte, sagte die Schrift nach ihnen deutlich aus: war doch Adam nach Gottes Bild geschaffen (*cum ad eius imaginem creatum Adam scriptura manifestissime testaretur*). Selbst in der Scete-Wüste, wo nach Cassianus die Mönche an Vollkommenheit und Kenntnis (*perfectione ac scientia*) alle anderen in den ägyptischen Klöstern übertrafen, wollte ausser Paphnutius keiner von jenen, welche die drei anderen Kirchen in dieser Regio betreuten, diesen Brief in der Kirche oder in den Klöstern vorlesen. Später schwenkte Theophilus um und fing an, eben die allegorische Exegese der Origenes-Anhänger zu bekämpfen. Damit entstand eine tiefgreifende Kontroverse im frühen Mönchtum<sup>39</sup>.

In den *Apophthegmata*-Sammlungen herrscht die anti-origenistische Stimmung vor<sup>40</sup>, die sich um 400 allseits zu verbreiten begann, aber die allegorischen Schriftinterpretationen, die ja auch einen Bestandteil der kirchlichen Tradition im allgemeinen bildeten, fehlen keineswegs. Bei den namentlich auf die Praxis eingestellten Asketen in der Wüste überwiegt jedoch die wörtliche Schrifterklärung. Es handelte sich bei ihnen um eine unmittelbare Zuspitzung auf die eigenen moralischen und religiösen Fragen, um eine bessere Erkenntnis, wie man Heil und Heiligkeit erwerben konnte.

Die fortwährende Beschäftigung mit dem Schrifttext, mit Lektüre, Meditation und Exegese wurde als eine Art Gebet betrachtet. Mehr noch als Fasten und Wachen war es eine Waffe im geistlichen Kampf. Dabei konnte man, parallel zum Fortschreiten im geistlichen Leben, sich in einer steigenden Linie bewegen, vom auswendig Kennen des Textes bis hin zu dessen Verständnis. Wenn man das Niveau der Reinheit des Herzen erreicht hatte, war man besser imstande, den tieferen geistlichen Schriftsinn aufzunehmen.

### *Den Bibeltexten wird bisweilen apotropäische Kraft zugeschrieben*

Ein Sonderaspekt bei der Verwendung von Bibeltexten in der Mönchswelt, wofür es eine Anzahl interessante Zeugnisse gibt, ist die

<sup>39</sup> Siehe H. Crouzel, Origène, précurseur du monachisme, in: G. Lemaître, *Théologie de la vie monastique. Etudes sur la tradition patristique* (Paris, 1961), S. 15-37; vgl. auch Karen Torjesen, *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen's Exegesis* (Berlin-New York, 1986).

<sup>40</sup> Vgl. z.B. Lot 1 (PG 65,253D-256). Für die Origenistische Frage bei den Mönchen: D.J. Chitty, *The Desert a City* (Oxford, 1966), S. 58.

apotropäische Kraft, welche man ihnen bisweilen zuschrieb. Neben Gebetsformeln verwendeten die Mönche auch Bibeltexte als Abwehrmittel gegen Dämonen. In der Praxis sind wir dann oft nicht weit von der Weise entfernt, in der in der heidnischen Welt der Spätantike magische Formeln, wie wir sie aus den Zauberpapyri kennen, verwendet werden, um böse Mächte fernzuhalten. Hier ist zum Beispiel auf einen Text aus den *Apophthegmata* hinzuweisen, wo ein anonymes Abba sagt, dass es für die Wirkung der ausgesprochenen Bibelworte nicht notwendig ist, ihre Bedeutung zu kennen.

Es genügt, sagte er, die Worte zu murmeln. Ich habe gehört, dass Abba Poemen und viele andere Väter sagten: 'Ein Magier versteht die Bedeutung der Worte nicht, die er ausspricht (Poemen meint, magische Laute seien meistens verunstaltet, oder bewusst unverständliche Laute), aber das wilde Tier, das sie hört, versteht sie und erfährt die zwingende Macht der Worte.' So ist es auch um uns bestellt: selbst wenn wir die Bedeutung der ausgesprochenen Bibelworte nicht verstehen, fürchten die Dämonen sich. Wenn sie diese hören, verschwinden sie rasch<sup>41</sup>.

Besonders das Neue Testament, wo gesagt wird, dass die Dämonen durch den Tod Christi endgültig überwunden sind, wurde von den Dämonen so sehr als bedrohend erfahren, dass nur das Aussprechen der Worte "Das Neue" genügte, um sie in die Flucht zu schlagen<sup>42</sup>.

In diesem Lichte werden wir auch einen Text aus der *Vita Hypatii* interpretieren müssen<sup>43</sup>. Wenn die Mönche des Alexander, des Abtes der Akömeten (der Niemals-Schlafenden), aus Konstantinopel vertrieben sind und von dem Kloster Rufinianae aus weiter flüchten wollen, hofft jeder, so der Verfasser der *Vita*, wenigstens ein Büchlein (βιβλίον) als Eulogie für die Reise mitnehmen zu können. Wahrscheinlich handelt es sich hier um ein Bibelbuch oder eine kleine Sammlung Bibeltexte, wie Reisende sie bisweilen als Talisman für unterwegs bei sich trugen<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> F. Nau, *Histoire des solitaires égyptiens* (MS Coislin 126, fol. 158f.), nos. 133-369, *ROC* 13 (1908), S. 271-272.

<sup>42</sup> L. Regnault, *Les sentences des pères du désert. Série des anonymes* (Solesmes-Bellefontaine, 1985) (N. 632, S. 275). Vgl. id., *Les sentences des pères du désert. Troisième recueil* (Sablé sur Sarthe-Solesmes, 1976), S. 107 (XXI 44): das Lesenhören der Schrift schreckt den Teufel ab.

<sup>43</sup> Callinicus, *Vita Hypatii* 41,13 (SC 177, S. 244).

<sup>44</sup> Vgl. *Vita Columbani 9 librum umeris ferens*. Siehe D. Gorce, *Les voyages, l'hospitalité et le port des lettres dans le monde chrétien des IVe et Ve siècles* (Paris, 1925), S. 128-130.



Viele der monastischen Schriften aus der Frühzeit des Mönchtums sind von der Bibel gesättigt und spiegeln somit den ständigen Kontakt wider, den die asketischen Kreise mit der Bibel hatten. Bibeltex-te, und ganz besonders aus einigen Bibelbüchern, finden sich auch oft in Anspielungen und ohne nähere Angabe der Zitate. In dieser Hinsicht ist die Verarbeitung des allesbestimmenden Buches mit der Weise vergleichbar, in der in der späteren griechisch-römischen Welt die profanen Schriftsteller in den grossen klassischen Autoren ihr Vorbild sahen. Der Vergleich betrifft jedoch nur den formalen Aspekt. Mit der Bibel sind wir inhaltlich in einer ganz anderen Welt mit einer ganz anderen Paideia.

In einem Brief an seinen Freund Gregor von Nazianz, aus der Anfangszeit seines zurückgezogenen Lebens im Pontus, hat Basilius die Bedeutung der Bibel für den Asketen treffend zum Ausdruck gebracht:

Lektüre und Meditation der Schrift verschaffen unentbehrliche Hilfe. Diese Texte bieten ja Verhaltensregeln und Vorbilder grossen Kalibers. Wir müssen diese befolgen, wie ein Maler äusserst sorgfältig ein Original kopiert<sup>45</sup>.

So sprechen auch die Wüstenväter. "Man soll praktizieren was geschrieben ist", wie Abba Gerontius seinen Besuchern zu sagen pflegte<sup>46</sup>. In der asketischen Welt war die Bibel neben Gebetstext an erster Stelle Wegweiser zum Himmel.

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<sup>45</sup> Basilius, *Ep.* 2,3 (ad Gregorium); Ausg. Y. Courtonne (Paris, 1957), S. 8-9.

<sup>46</sup> Gerontius 1 (PG 65,153AB).

## DIE BIBEL IN DEN GEBETSFORMELN DER LATEINISCHEN KIRCHE

A.A.R. Bastiaensen

Über die Formen des Betens in der Frühzeit der Kirche ist nicht viel bekannt. Für die neutestamentlichen und die ältesten christlichen Schriftsteller ist das ständig wiederholte persönliche und öffentliche Gebet eine Selbstverständlichkeit, aber es fehlen genauere Auskünfte, besonders in bezug auf Art und Weise des öffentlichen Gebets. Eines ist allerdings deutlich: von Anfang an hat, unter den Zusammenkünften zum Gebet, die von Paulus im ersten Korintherbrief (1 Kor. 11,20ff.) beschriebene *cena dominica* ihren eigenen Platz eingenommen. Das hat dazu geführt, dass sich in der allmählichen Gestaltung des öffentlichen Gebets zwei scharf unterschiedene Formen herausgeschält haben: die Eucharistiefeier und das Stundengebet<sup>1</sup>. In beiden spielt das Wort der Bibel eine wichtige Rolle, aber zwischen beiden gibt es auch, gerade in dieser Beziehung, einen grossen Unterschied. Das Stundengebet besteht fast vollständig aus wörtlich wiedergegebenen Texten der H. Schrift. Das gilt in erster Linie für den Hauptinhalt, für die biblische Lyrik der Psalmen und anderer biblischer Gesänge wie *Benedictus*, *Magnificat* und *Nunc dimittis*, u.dgl., sowie für die diesen Liedern entnommenen oder aufs engste mit ihnen verbundenen Antiphonen und Responsorien. Des weiteren für den anfänglich ausgedehnten, später stark gekürzten Bestandteil der Bibellesung. Weil Lyrik und Lesung des Stundengebetes den Text der Bibel wörtlich und nicht in Gebetsformeln umgesetzt, nicht 'euchologisch', anführen, hat eine linguistische oder stilistische Untersuchung hier keinen Zweck. Der Hymnus als Bestandteil des Stundengebetes ist nahe mit den Psalmen und anderen biblischen Liedern

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<sup>1</sup> Seit dem vierten Jahrhundert unterscheiden sich zwei Formen des Stundengebetes, das Kathedraloffizium der kirchlichen Gemeinde und das monastische Offizium der Klöster. Aber nach Gliederung und Inhalt ist zwischen den beiden kein wesentlicher Unterschied: vgl. J. Jungmann, *Der Gottesdienst der Kirche, auf dem Hintergrund seiner Geschichte kurz erläutert* (Innsbruck-Wien-München, 1955), pp. 172-175 und P. Salmon, "La prière des heures", A. Martimort éd., *L'Église en prière. Introduction à la liturgie* (Paris-Tournai-Rome-New York, 1961), pp. 787-876: s. pp. 801-805.

verwandt: er bleibt hier ausser Betracht, so wichtig er in sprachlicher Hinsicht auch sein mag<sup>2</sup>.

Unsere Aufmerksamkeit richtet sich also auf die andere Form des christlichen Gottesdienstes, die Feier der Eucharistie. Bestand hier anfänglich eine grosse Freiheit in der Formulierung der Gebete, so sehen wir seit dem vierten Jahrhundert feste Strukturen entstehen, die die Umrahmung für die mit den Festen des kirchlichen Kalenders wechselnden Gebetsformeln bilden. Eine auffallende Entwicklung führte weiter noch dazu, dass der eigentlichen Eucharistiefeier, der 'Opfermesse', normalerweise ein Wortgottesdienst, die 'Vormesse', voranging, in dem, ausser den für unsere Untersuchung unwichtigen Lesungen mit Psalmen und Antiphonen, auch die nach dem Kalender wechselnde Kollekte ihren Platz hat<sup>3</sup>. In den meisten Formularen des *Sacramentarium Veronense*, der ältesten römischen euchologischen Sammlung, das der spezielle Gegenstand unserer Untersuchung sein wird, finden wir eine weitere variable Oration, die *oratio super sindonem* —als solche erhalten in der ambrosianischen (mailändischen) Liturgie—, die, an ihrem Platz nach der Lesung des Evangeliums, gleichsam den Übergang von Vormesse zu Opfermesse markiert<sup>4</sup>.

Die wechselnden Gebete nun, mit denen unsere Untersuchung sich beschäftigen wird, sind folgende: 1) aus der Vormesse die Kollekte; 2) aus dem Übergang von Vormesse zu Opfermesse die *oratio super sindonem*, 'die zweite Oration', wie wir sie nennen werden; 3) aus der Opfermesse a) das Gebet zur Darbringung der Gaben, das Opfergebet, *super oblata* oder *secreta* genannt, b) die Präfation, *praefatio*, die

<sup>2</sup> Für Kontakte zwischen Psalmodie und Hymnodie s. J. Fontaine, *Naissance de la poésie dans l'Occident chrétien* (Paris, 1981), pp. 87-89. pp. 132-135; s. von derselben Hand "Introduction. Psalmodie et hymnodie", in *Ambroise de Milan. Hymnes. Texte établi, traduit et annoté sous la direction de J. Fontaine* (Paris, 1992), pp. 28-41.

<sup>3</sup> Das Stundengebet hat auch die Kollekte am Ende des Offiziums. In der heutigen Situation ist sie mit der Kollekte der Vormesse identisch. Wie diese Übereinstimmung zu erklären ist, ist mir nicht bekannt. Einen Sonderfall bilden die aus der Antike in mindestens drei Serien (einer afrikanischen, einer römischen und einer spanischen) überlieferten Psalmkollekten. Diese Kollekten, deren jede einzelne die einzelnen Psalmen des Stundengebets abschliesst, waren in Ost (Egeria und Cassian) und West (die *Regula Magistri*, nicht mehr in der *Regula Benedicti*!) in Gebrauch: vgl. A. Wilmart—L. Brou, *The Psalter Collects from Vth—VIth Century Sources* (Henry Bradshaw Society 83), London, 1949: s. "Introduction". In diesen Orationen (einige nicht-literarisch, andere gepflegt, z.B. mit *cursus* ausgestattet) ist der Psalmtext Hauptinhalt. Die erwünschte Untersuchung über Sprache und Stil steht noch aus.

<sup>4</sup> s. A. Chavasse, *Le sacramentaire gélasien (Vaticanus Reginensis 316) sacramentaire presbytéral en usage dans les titres romains au VIIe siècle* (Bibliothèque de Théologie IV, 1), Paris-Tournai-New York-Rome, 1957, pp. 190-195.

einleitende Formel des eucharistischen Hochgebetes, c) das Gebet nach der Kommunion, die Postkommunion, *postcommunio*; 4) aus dem Schlussteil die *oratio super populum*, das Segnungsgebet, mit dem der Zelebrant den Segen, den er zur Verabschiedung der Anwesenden aussprechen wird, einleitet. Diese sechs Gebete bilden zusammen den normalen Inhalt eines Messformulars. Hinzu kommen übrigens die Sonderformeln, die wir im *Veronense*, wie in allen Sakramentarien, vorfinden, für bestimmte Feierlichkeiten, für die Spendung der Sakramente, für die Weihe zum Bischof, Priester und Diakon, für die zwei auf die Frau abgestimmten Riten, der Eheschliessung (*velatio nuptialis*) und des feierlichen Eintritts in das monastische Leben, und für andere besondere Gelegenheiten.

Das ganze Gebiet überblickend stellen wir fest, dass, obschon viel Textmaterial verlorengegangen ist (von dem der nordafrikanischen Kirche nahezu sämtliches), dennoch aus dem Reichtum, den der lateinische Westen im Lauf des ersten Millenniums aufgebaut hat, viele Tausende Gebete auf uns gekommen sind. Im Rahmen dieser Studie ist es nicht möglich, für all dieses Material dem Einfluss der Bibel bei der Redaktionsarbeit nachzugehen<sup>5</sup>. Im folgenden wird ein, allerdings nur vorläufiger, Versuch unternommen, das älteste uns bekannte lateinische Material, die im *Sacramentarium Veronense*<sup>6</sup> aufbewahrten euchologischen Dokumente der römischen Kirche aus dem fünften und sechsten Jahrhundert, auf biblischen Einfluss zu prüfen: viele Formeln aus dieser Sammlung sind immerhin von den späteren westlichen, auch nicht-römischen, Sakramentarien übernommen worden. Zunächst geben wir eine Beschreibung von der Präsenz der Bibel in den Präfationen, die als Lobgebet ihren eigenen Platz im Korpus der Gebete einnehmen; anschliessend folgen die fünf ande-

<sup>5</sup> Auf diesem Gebiet steckt die wissenschaftliche Arbeit noch in den Kinderschuhen. In einer liturgiegeschichtlichen Übersicht erwähnt Saxer das fast völlige Fehlen von Ergebnissen betreffs der 'présence biblique' in den liturgischen Texten: V. Saxer, "Bible et liturgie", J. Fontaine—Ch. Piétri éd., *Le monde latin antique et la Bible* (Bible de tous les temps 2), Paris, 1985, pp. 157-183: s. Schlussbemerkungen.

<sup>6</sup> Die kritische Ausgabe des in der Kapitelbibliothek von Verona aufgefundenen Dokuments ist von L.C. Mohlberg: *Sacramentarium Veronense* (Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta. Series maior. Fontes 1), <sup>3</sup>Roma, 1956. Die frühere Benennung *Sacramentarium Leonianum* beruht auf der falschen Annahme, dass Papst Leo der Grosse um die Mitte des fünften Jahrhunderts dieses Material redigiert oder gesammelt hätte. Über das *Veronense* als Quelle euchologischen Materials findet man einiges in J. Hennig, "Studies in the Vocabulary of the *Sacramentarium Veronense*" in John J. O'Meara and Bernd Naumann ed., *Latin Script and Letters A.D. 400-900. Festschrift presented to Ludwig Bieler on the occasion of his 70th birthday* (Leiden, 1976), pp. 101-112.

ren Orationen des Messformulars, die, aufgrund ihres gemeinsamen Charakters als Bittgebet, in der Besprechung zusammengekommen werden.

### *Die älteste römische Präfation*

Die variable Präfation ist ein für den lateinischen Westen kennzeichnendes Gebet. Den griechischen Liturgien ist sie unbekannt, weil dort das eucharistische Hochgebet ein festes Gefüge von einer Anzahl die Einsetzungsworte umrahmender unveränderlicher Gebete bildet. In der lateinischen Tradition finden wir zwei Formen. In der gallikanischen Liturgie im gallischen Raum und der mozarabischen Liturgie in der Iberischen Halbinsel sind alle Bestandteile des Hochgebetes, die Einsetzungsworte ausgenommen, variabel, während in der römischen und in der ambrosianischen (mailändischen) Liturgie nur das feierliche einleitende Gebet, die Präfation, veränderlich ist. Diese Präfation hat die ausserordentlich wichtige Funktion, den Aspekt des Lobes und des Dankes, der den Kern der Eucharistie ausmacht, prononciert hervorzuheben. Anschliessend an die letzte Formel des einleitenden Dialogs: *Gratias agamus domino deo nostro—Dignum et iustum est*, fängt sie denn auch immer mit dem fast lyrischen Ausruf an: *Vere dignum et iustum est, aequum et salutare, nos tibi semper et ubique gratias agere*. Und es folgt dann der sehr logische Übergang zur Feier des Tages: (... Dir immer zu danken), insonderheit heute, bei Gelegenheit des Weihnachtsfestes, des Festes der Himmelfahrt Christi, des Festes der Apostelfürsten Petrus und Paulus, des Jahrtags der Bischofsweihe, des Anfangs der Fastenzeit, usw. Für die Hervorhebung und Ausarbeitung des Festthemas stellt sich dann die Bibel als die bevorzugte Quelle heraus.

So ist Weihnachtspräfation 1245 des *Sacramentarium Veronense* eine Aneinanderreihung biblischer Aussagen über die *magnalia* des Herrn: erfüllt ist jetzt, was die Propheten vorhergesagt haben (Luk. 1,70): die Jungfrau hat empfangen und den Sohn geboren, der Emmanuel heisst (Jes. 7,14; Matth. 1,23); das Wort ist Fleisch geworden und ist gekommen um unter uns zu wohnen (Joh. 1,14). Der letzte Teil der Präfation zitiert ausführlich Jesaja: ein Knabe ist uns geboren; Herrschaft ruht auf seinen Schultern; sein Name wird sein der Wunderbare, Engel des grossen Ratschlusses, starker Gott, Vater der kommenden Welt, Friedensfürst; ausgedehnt wird seine Herrschaft sein, und

des Friedens über dem Thron und dem Königreich Davids wird kein Ende sein (Jes. 9,6-7). Der Schluss schlägt wiederum eine lyrische Tonart an: deswegen jauchzt mit uneingeschränkter Freude auf dem ganzen Erdkreis die Menschheit (*unde profusis gaudiis totus in orbe terrarum mundus exsultat*). Und mit den Engeln und Erzengeln, mit den Thronen und Gewalten, mit dem gesamten himmlischen Heere singen wir zum Lobe Deiner Herrlichkeit: *Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, dominus deus sabaoth*. Die Präfation als Ganzes erweist sich somit als eine geschlossene und sehr eindrucksvolle Komposition.

Weihnachtspräfation 1247 ist, gleichfalls mit wörtlichen Zitaten, Anpassung einer Anzahl von Versen aus dem *Benedictus*, dem Lobgesang des Zacharias über das Heil, das gekommen ist (Luk. 1,68-79). In 1250 werden alttestamentliche Figuren als heilsgeschichtliche Vorbilder des jetzt erschienenen Erlösers aufgeführt: der gerechte Abel, das jüdische Osterlamm, Abraham, Melchisedech. Eine kurze Präfation für Christi Himmelfahrt (177) entlehnt aus dem Psalm (Ps. 23[24],7-10) Worte über den König der Herrlichkeit, den Herrn der Himmelsmächte, der vor den bewundernden Blicken der Engelsfürsten die Erstlinge der Auferstehung zur Rechten Gottes sitzen heisst. Präfationen für Märtyrerfeste haben manchmal (11. 68. 166) als Leitgedanken den Glückwunsch des Paulus an die Philipper (Phil. 1,29), dass es ihnen geschenkt wurde, nicht nur an Christus zu glauben, sondern auch für ihn zu leiden. In den Präfationen für Märtyrerinnen (826. 839. 1180. 1185) steht die Geschichte der Genesis über den Sündenfall im Mittelpunkt: betont wird, dass der Teufel, damals durch Versagen der Frau Sieger, jetzt durch Tapferkeit der Frau Erschlagener ist.

Auffällig ist der Aufbau einer Präfation für den 27. Dezember, das Fest des Apostels und Evangelisten Johannes: es geziemt uns, Dich, Gott, zu loben am Fest des Johannes, des von Deinem Sohn Gerufenen, der seinen irdischen Vater verliess (Matth. 4,22; Mk. 1,20; Luk. 5,11), um einen himmlischen zu erwerben; der die Netze der Welt wegwarf, um in Freiheit leben zu können; der aus einem auf den Wogen tanzenden Schiff ausstieg, um Rudergänger in Deiner Kirche zu werden; der den Fischfang aufgab, um mit der Angel der Heilslehre die Menschen aus den Strudeln der bösen Welt herauszuziehen; der das Eindringen in die Geheimnisse des Meeres mit dem Eindringen in die göttlichen Geheimnisse vertauschte; denn diese Geheimnisse hat er ergründet: bei der *cena mystica*, dem letzten Abendmahl, als er sich an die Brust Jesu legte (Joh. 13,23.25); unterm Kreuz, als

Jesus ihn an seiner Statt Sohn seiner jungfräulichen Mutter machte (Joh. 19,27); als der inspirierte Prediger, der an den anderen Jüngern vorbei die Aufgabe erhielt, das Wort Gottes zu verkünden, das im Anfang bei Gott war (Joh. 1,1). Die Aussagen der Bibel über das Aufgeben der Arbeit in der Fischerei dienen hier als Gegenstand der Allegorisierung. Die Christen fanden in den biblischen Worten oft mehr als dasjenige, was diese dem Buchstaben nach sagten: auch in allegorischer Deutung verherrlichten diese Aussagen die *magnalia* Gottes.

Dass es dabei gelegentlich zu merkwürdigen Interpretationen kommen konnte, beweist eine Präfation (1291) für das Fest der Unschuldigen Kinder, am 28. Dezember. Ausgangspunkt für den Verfasser ist das Zitat in Matthäus 2,18, anlässlich des Kindermordes in Bethlehem, von Jeremia 31,15 über Rachel, die sich nicht wollte trösten lassen, weil ihre Kinder *non sunt* 'nicht mehr da sind'. Er versteht aber *non sunt* als: weil die Kinder, die die Märtyrerkrone erhalten haben, 'nicht ihre Kinder sind'. Als Märtyrer gekrönt sind nämlich die Kinder Lias, der Rivalin Rachels in der Gunst des Patriarchen Jakob (Gen. 29,14-30,24): aus Lia, der zweiten und viel fruchtbareren Frau Jakobs, stammen die Unschuldigen Kinder. Man kann nicht umhin, hier eine Anspielung zu hören auf den Gegensatz zwischen dem erstgeliebten, dem jüdischen Volk, das abgewiesen, und dem Volk der zweiten Liebe, dem Volk der Christen, das bereits in den Unschuldigen Kindern auserwählt wurde.

In den Präfationen zu Ehren des Stephanus, des ersten Märtyrers, des Lieblings der Kirche in Ost und West, dessen Fest am 26. Dezember begangen wurde (673. 680. 686. 688. 694. 701), sind die Hinweise auf biblische Textstellen zahlreich: Stephanus hat die Versorgung der Witwen in der Gemeinde betreut; in den Auseinandersetzungen mit jüdischen Gegnern hat er die Oberhand gewonnen; die Himmel hat er offen gesehen und den Sohn des Menschen zur Rechten Gottes stehen sehen; für seine Verfolger hat er gebetet (Apg. 6,1.11; 7,55.60). Der Redaktor hat sich hier übrigens nicht mit den Mitteilungen seiner Quelle zufriedengegeben. In die Erwähnung der Betreuung der Witwen hat er, vielleicht nach 1 Tim. 4,12 oder 2 Tim. 3,6, die Beteuerung hineingeschmuggelt, dass dabei die Ehrbarkeit keineswegs verletzt wurde (673. 680). Wir wundern uns nicht darüber, dass in den Präfationen 673 und 688 auf den Namen des Märtyrers, Stephanus, griechisch für 'Kranz', 'Märtyrerkranz', angespielt wird. Gänzlich unerwartet und einigermaßen bestürzend ist

aber die Verbindung der Steinigung des Stephanus (Apg. 7,58-59) mit dem Wort aus dem ersten Brief des Petrus (1 Petr. 2,5) über die Gläubigen, die als lebendige Steine, *lapides vivi*, aufgebaut werden: Stephanus ist ein 'lebendiger Stein heiligen Zeugnisses' (688).

Mit einem derartigen, ziemlich willkürlichen Heranziehen von Textstellen wird die Bibel nicht gering bemüht. In einem ganz anderen Sinne ist das auch der Fall mit der Präfation aus einem *Lupercalia*-Formular (530), verwendet am 5. März, dem vierten Fastensonntag, im Jahre 495. Die Affäre der *Lupercalia* hat sich im *Sacramentarium Veronense* in einer Anzahl markanter Messformulare niedergeschlagen, die von G. Pomarès mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit identifiziert und mit den genauen Daten versehen worden sind<sup>7</sup>. Papst Gelasius I., Ende des fünften Jahrhunderts, zog ins Feld gegen das Fortleben des von frühesten Zeiten überkommenen, heidnischen Lupercalia-Festes: das wurde ihm verübelt und er wurde Zielscheibe bitterer Verleumdung und Verdächtigung seitens seiner Gegner. Seine Antwort in liturgischer Form war auch nicht gerade sanftmütig, wie aus der Präfation hervorgeht. Typisch ist, dass der Lob- und Dankcharakter zurücktritt, die Bibel aber nicht ausser Funktion gesetzt wird: sie wird benutzt als Arsenal in der Kampagne gegen die Feinde. Diese sind *falsi fratres* (2 Kor. 11,26; Gal. 2,4), an ihren Früchten erkennbar (Zitat von Matth. 7,20), zur Hoffart getrieben, weil sie alles fleischlich verstehen (Kol. 2,18-19), nur auf das Irdische bedacht (Phil. 3,19), Sachen des Geistes als Torheiten betrachtend (1 Kor. 2,14), im Glauben verwerflich (2 Tim. 3,8), nicht verstehend, was sie behaupten (1 Tim. 1,7), trügerische Arbeiter (2 Kor. 11,13), Erkunder der Freiheit der Christen (Gal. 2,4), sich in die Häuser drängend und mit Sünden beladene Weiber zu ihrer Beute machend (2 Tim. 3,6), mit Kalk bestrichene Grabkammern, von aussen schön, innen aber voll von Gebeinen und jeglichem Unrat (Matth. 23,27), und desgleichen mehr. Am Ende folgt die Warnung, der Christ möge sich vor diesen unordentlich wandelnden Brüdern hüten (2 Thess. 3,6) und sich jenen Werken widmen, derentwegen die wahren Gläubigen Gott, von dem jedes vollkommene Geschenk (Jak. 1,17), des guten Gewissens und des guten Leumunds, herkommt, preisen und verherrlichen (Matth. 5,16). Nur am Schluss also kommt die Präfation auf ihr eigenes Gebiet.

<sup>7</sup> G. Pomarès, *Gélase Ier. Lettre contre les Lupercales et dix-huit messes du sacramentaire léonien. Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes* SC 65 (Paris, 1959).



Hin und wieder kommt sie aber nicht einmal so weit. In einer Ferialtagspräfation (668) treffen wir in dem an Gott gerichteten Gebet auf einen Gedankengang, der wie alltägliche Lebensweisheit anmutet: Dein Wille ist es, dass das Menschengeschlecht eine Gemeinschaft von Gleichberechtigten ist; darum befiehst Du uns, jeden Zwiespalt und alles, was Ruhe und Harmonie stört, abzuweisen; vor Unrecht sollen wir uns hüten, damit wir alle gleicher Gesinnung sind; was Dir nicht gefällt, sollen wir vermeiden, und suchen, was Dich gnädig stimmt. Es ist der übliche Schlusssatz 'durch Christus, unseren Herrn, durch den die Engel... nicht aufhören zu singen: *Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus*', der uns daran erinnert, dass der Text eine Präfation ist. Eine andere Ferialtagspräfation (434) bietet in stark rhetorischer Form die *regula aurea*: 'was du nicht willst, dass man dir tu', das füg auch keinem andern zu'. Die Goldene Regel ist natürlich auch biblisch (vgl. Tob. 4,16 und Matth. 7,12), aber der Verfasser der Präfation scheint den Schluss seiner Beweisführung eher aus stoischem als aus biblischem Gedankengut entlehnt zu haben. Er formuliert: wenn jedermann seinen *consors naturae*, seinen der gleichen Natur teilhaftigen Mitmenschen, liebt, dann entsteht eine *semet ipsam diligens mens una cunctorum*, 'eine sich selbst liebende geistliche Einheit des ganzen Menschengeschlechts'. Eine *Lupercalia*-Präfation (422) verbindet auch Stoisches und Biblisches, indem sie den *consors naturae*-Gedanken mit einer Empfehlung des doppelten Gebotes der Liebe zu Gott und zu dem Nächsten verflcht (Matth. 22,37-41).

Vieles könnte noch aus den zahlreichen Präfationen des *Veronense* zitiert werden, aber es ist ohnehin deutlich, dass wir es mit einer Serie von Gebetstexten zu tun haben, die, trotz ihres ursprünglichen gemeinsamen Charakters als Lobpreis, in Thematik und Aufbau eine grosse Variation aufweisen. Manche spiegeln augenblickliche Bedürfnisse und Sorgen wider: so die Präfationen für Festtage, für die Fastenzeit, für den Jahrestag der Bischofsweihe, u.dgl.; gleichfalls die mit Problemen in der Kirche zusammenhängenden Texte, wie die *Lupercalia*-Präfationen oder die Präfationen für Kriegszeit, die die Angst vor Tod und Verheerung widerspiegeln (446. 452, von Chavasse mit grosser Wahrscheinlichkeit in die Tage der Belagerung Roms durch die Ostgoten im Jahre 537 datiert<sup>8</sup>). Aber daneben gibt es auch viele Texte allgemeineren Inhalts: manche ethischer oder

<sup>8</sup> s. A. Chavasse, "Messes du pape Vigile (537-555) dans le sacramentaire léonien", *Ephemerides liturgicae* 64(1950), pp. 161-213; 66(1952), pp. 145-219.

katechetischer Art zur Ermunterung oder Belehrung der Gläubigen, andere beschaulich mit sogar Platz für nicht ausdrücklich christliche religiöse Lebensweisheit. Sorgfältige Inventarisierung und genaue Analyse der Vielzahl von Präfationen des *Veronense* könnte unsere Kenntnis von den Problemen, die das theologische und kulturelle Leben Roms im fünften und sechsten Jahrhundert beherrschten, vielleicht beträchtlich erweitern<sup>9</sup>. Aber das liegt jetzt ausserhalb unseres Blickfelds. Für uns ist die Feststellung wichtig, dass der Verfasser einer Präfation—wir müssen annehmen, dass das der Papst oder sein Sekretär war—, an erster Stelle zur Bibel griff, sei es, dass es galt, Worte und Ausdrücke zu finden, die in eigentlicher oder allegorischer Verwendung das Lob Gottes singen und den Anlass zu diesem Lob beschreiben könnten, sei es, dass es galt, die Sorge der Kirche um bestimmte Probleme oder pastorale Erwägungen allerlei Art in Worte zu fassen. Die Freiheit ist gross: im Rahmen der festen Formeln von Lob und Dank am Anfang und am Ende ist Raum für vielerlei, auch für Ideen und Worte populärphilosophischer Weisheit, die man an diesem Höhepunkt der liturgischen Feier nicht erwarten würde. Die römische Kirche hat übrigens selbst das Gefühl gehabt, dass Auswüchse drohten, in Quantität wie in Qualität. Im *Sacramentarium Gregorianum*, einer im siebten Jahrhundert angelegten Sammlung von Gebeten für die päpstliche Liturgie, ist die Zahl der Präfationen drastisch reduziert und der Inhalt auf das in religiöser Hinsicht Wesentliche beschränkt.

Am Ende dieses Abschnitts bleibt uns noch die Frage, wie in den Entlehnungen der Präfationen mit dem Wortlaut der Bibel verfahren wird. Der redaktionelle Raum, über den der Verfasser verfügt, veranlasst unterschiedliche Formen der Verarbeitung. In manchen Fällen handelt es sich um einen Hinweis auf ein biblisches Ereignis, ohne dass der Text zitiert oder irgendwie verarbeitet wird: so in der oben erwähnten Präfation des Apostels und Evangelisten Johannes (1276), der den Vater verlässt und den Fischfang aufgibt.

<sup>9</sup> In diesem Zusammenhang muss vielleicht auf die Tatsache hingewiesen werden, dass der *consors naturae*-Gedanke, von dem oben die Rede war, sich auch in Werken des Ambrosius findet (*De Nabuthe* 2.40; *De Helia* 11; *Exp. Ev. Luc.* 6,42, usw.). Der Bischof von Mailand arbeitet diesen philosophischen Gedanken stoischer Prägung in seine biblisch-christlichen Anschauungen hinein. Die Übereinstimmung mit dem Verfahren der liturgischen Autoren ist augenfällig. Für die Auffassung des Ambrosius, s. M. Poirier, “‘Consors naturae’ chez saint Ambroise. Copropriété de la nature ou communauté de la nature?”, *Ambrosius Episcopus. Atti del Congresso internazionale di studi ambrosiani* vol. 2 (Studia patristica mediolanensia 7), Milano, 1976, pp. 325-335.

Meistens aber ist der Bibeltext gut erkennbar. Manchmal gibt es in dieser zweiten Gruppe wörtliche Wiedergaben, wie in den obengenannten Weihnachtspräfationen (1245 und 1247), die eine Aneinanderreihung von Bibelziten sind. In den meisten Fällen jedoch ist das biblische Textmaterial einer stilistischen Verarbeitung unterzogen. Ein wichtiges Element dieser Verarbeitung ist das Ausschmücken von Satz und Kolon mit dem sogenannten *cursus*, der künstlichen Anordnung der betonten Schlussilben. Die schon erwähnte Präfation für Himmelfahrt (177), die Psalm 23[24],7-10 als wichtigste Quelle hat, ist ein sprechendes Beispiel: die Psalmverse werden in der Weise angepasst, dass ein kurzer, stilisierter Text entsteht, der auch noch fünfmal einen der in den liturgischen Texten üblichen *cursus* aufweist:

qui mirantibus angelis angelorúmque princípibus, rex gloriae dominúsque virtútum, resurrectionis beátæ primitias, throno tuæ maiestátis oblátus, in tua secum dèxtera collocávit:

der Reihe nach *cursus tardus* (Betonung der sechsten und dritten Silbe von hinten), *cursus planus* (Betonung der fünften und zweiten), abermals *cursus tardus* und *cursus planus*, als Schluss *cursus velox* (Betonung der siebten und zweiten Silbe), eine mit grosser Sorgfalt angebrachte Textverzierung. In der auffallenden *Lupercalia*-Präfation des Papstes Gelasius (530) sind die biblischen Verurteilungen der Gegner manchmal wörtliche Zitate, manchmal mit einem *cursus* versehene Stilisierungen: wörtliches Zitat ist *ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos*; stilisierte und mit *cursus* geschmückte Verarbeitung ist:

domi forisque spurciám contrahéntes, non tam referti sunt óssibus mortuórum, quam magis ípsi sunt mórtui:

zweimal *cursus velox*, einmal *cursus tardus*.

Die dritte und letzte Kategorie bilden die zahlreichen Passagen, die der Verfasser nicht anhand eines bestimmten Bibeltextes aufgebaut hat, die er aber, bewusst oder unbewusst, mit biblischen Wörtern oder Ausdrücken ausgestattet hat. Auf diese biblische Prägung der liturgischen Diktion werden wir im jetzt folgenden Kapitel über die Orationen zurückkommen.

### *Die ältesten römischen Orationen*

Die Formeln des *Veronense* bieten, wie oben angedeutet, neben der

Präfation fünf Orationen: Kollekte, zweite Oration, Opfergebet, Postkommunion und Segnungsgebet. Im Zusammenhang mit ihrer Bestimmung weisen diese Gebete gegenseitig Unterschiede auf. Zwischen dem Segnungsgebet und den vier anderen Orationen besteht ein struktureller Unterschied, weil in letzteren der Zelebrant Vorsteher ist und als Sprecher des Volkes zu Gott betet, während er im Segnungsgebet sich selbständig an Gott richtet und Ihn bittet, den Segen, den er über das Volk zu sprechen sich anschickt, zu bestätigen<sup>10</sup>. Vom grammatischen Blickpunkt aus gesehen bedeutet dies, dass in den vier genannten Orationen die erste Person Plural die normale Form ist: 'wir bitten dich, Herr', 'Herr, erbarme dich unser', im Gegensatz zum Segnungsgebet, das, als Bittgebet zugunsten anderer, die dritte Person verwendet: 'Herr, erbarme dich ihrer', ihrer, das heisst 'deines Volkes', 'der Anwesenden'. Zudem ist das Segnungsgebet durch eine bestimmte, mit dem Inhalt zusammenhängende Wortwahl gekennzeichnet, mit Termini wie *inclinare*, *prosterni*, *benedicere*, *intendere*, *visitare*, *protegere*, *respicere*, u.dgl. Die "Wir-Gebete" weisen gegenseitig bloss einen funktionellen Unterschied auf. Die Eingangsgebete, die Kollekte und gewissermassen auch die zweite Oration, betonen die Idee von Zusammenkunft und Festlichkeit mit Wörtern und Ausdrücken wie *celebrare*, *concurrere*, *festum*, *sollemnitatis*, *preces suscipere*, *preces exaudire* oder in der Fastenzeit *observantia*, *emendatio*, u.dgl. Im Opfergebet erscheinen regelmässig *hostia*, *hostia laudis*, *immolare*, *oblatio*, *sacrificium*, *munera*, *dona*. Die Postkommunion hat immer wieder *percipere*, *reficere*, *vegetare*, *sumere*, *potus*, *gustus*, *participatio sacramenti*, usw. Diese funktionellen Unterschiede, sowie auch der strukturelle Unterschied zwischen dem Segnungsgebet und den anderen vier Gebeten, bedeuten jedoch nicht, dass wir es bei den fünf mit gegenseitig grundverschiedenen Wortverbindungen oder Stilelementen zu tun haben. Ins Auge fällt vielmehr die Übereinstimmung, mit der sie sich als Gesamtheit vom sechsten Gebet des Messformulars, der Präfation, abheben.

Die Orationen unterscheiden sich von der Präfation dadurch, dass ihre Bestimmung als Bittgebet andere Kategorien von Gedanken und Ausdrucksformen verlangt, als es für das Lobgebet der Präfation der

<sup>10</sup> Dies geht sehr deutlich aus Segnungsgebet 467 hervor: *Tui sunt, domine, populi, qui ministerium vocis nostrae expectant. Quaesumus clementiam tuam, ut salutaria eis poscentibus, quidquid fiducia non habet deprecantis, gratia tua quae bonorum nostrorum non indiget largiatur*: es leuchtet ein, dass *ministerium vocis nostrae*, *quaesumus* und *fiducia deprecantis* Worte des Zelebranten sind, der beim Sprechen der Segensformel für das Volk beten wird.

Fall ist. In den Orationen fehlt es zwar nicht an Elementen von Lob und Dank, so wie auch einzelne Bestandteile einer Präfation manchmal als Bittgebet auftreten: es gibt sogar Fälle von Umarbeitung, wodurch Präfation zu Oration, Oration zu Präfation geworden ist<sup>11</sup>. Aber trotz einer gelegentlich auftretenden gegenseitigen Beeinflussung stellen wir fest, dass Präfation und Orationen, in Gedankenführung und Ausdrucksweise und besonders auch im Aufbau des Textes, klar voneinander unterschieden sind. Die Präfation, wie sich im vorhergehenden herausgestellt hat, bietet dem Verfasser Raum: das Hauptthema von Lob und Dank und die vielen hinzukommenden Themen können mit biblischem Textmaterial gleichsam in Breite und Fülle ausgearbeitet werden. In den Orationen dagegen herrschen Beschränkung, Kürze und Ausgewogenheit im Ausdruck vor, wie auch der zurückhaltende Umgang mit biblischem Textmaterial deutlich macht.

An diesem Material fehlt es in den Orationen übrigens nicht. Mindestens auf drei Weisen spielt es in den Gebetsformeln eine Rolle. Manchmal bildet der Bibeltext selbst den Inhalt des Gebets; an vielen anderen Stellen dient er als Motivation und Begründung der Bitte; schliesslich gibt es, verstreut über die Formeln, die zahllosen Termini und Wendungen, die der Verfasser bei der Redaktionsarbeit aus dem ihm zur Verfügung stehenden biblischen Wortschatz geschöpft hat.

### 1. *Der Bibeltext als Bittgebet*

Der Bibeltext kann selbst als Bittgebet verwendet werden, sei es in einer wörtlichen oder nahezu wörtlichen Zitierung, sei es in einer stilistischen Verarbeitung, einer Reminiszenz oder irgendeinem vagen Hinweis. Den als Bittgebet fungierenden, fast wörtlichen Bibeltext finden wir, sogar mit Erwähnung des Verfassers, in einem Segnungsgebet für das Fest der Unschuldigen Kinder (1293):

Tribue, domine, quaesumus, fidelibus tuis: ut, sicut ait apostolus, non efficiantur pueri sensibus, sed malitia innoxii repperiantur et parvuli: ut martyres festivitatis hodiernae, quos meritis aequare non possunt, mentis simplicitate sectentur (Paulus in 1 Kor. 14,20).

Weiter bietet das *Veronense* eine kleine Anzahl sehr kurzer Orationen, deren ganzer Inhalt oder doch ein beträchtlicher Teil davon den Bibeltext, in angepasster oder nichtangepasster Form, wiedergibt. So

<sup>11</sup> s. Ausgabe Mohlberg (Anmerkung 6), CIV.

in *Ostende nobis, domine, misericordiam tuam, et salutaris tui dona concede* (37), der zweiten Oration eines Messformulars für Hilfe in Zeiten der Prüfung<sup>12</sup>, tatsächlich Übernahme von Psalm 84[85],8: *Ostende nobis, domine, misericordiam tuam, et salutare tuum da nobis*, mit stilistischer Anpassung der letzten Worte. Die Kollekte des selben Formulars (36): *Propitius esto, domine, plebi tuae, et auxilium nobis de sancto celerius fac adesse* lässt auf einen Text, der an Bibelstellen, in denen um Gottes Hilfe gefleht wird, erinnert—die Bitte, dass Gott *propitius* sei, finden wir z.B. in Deut. 21,8; Psalm 78[79],9, Luk. 18,13—eine stilistische Umgestaltung des Psalmwortes 19[20],3: *Mittat tibi auxilium de sancto* folgen: man achte auf den *cursus velox: celérius fac adesse*<sup>13</sup>. In einer Kollekte für eine Fastenmesse (509):

Parce, domine, parce pópulo túo, ut dignis flagellatióibus castigátus, in tua miseratióne respíret,

folgt eine stilisierte nichtbiblische zweite Hälfte auf ein wörtliches Zitat des Propheten Joel (2,17), das Ganze so formuliert, dass dreimal ein *cursus* erscheint (*cursus planus, cursus velox, cursus planus*). In Kollekte 576:

Ne despicias, domine, quaesumus, in afflictione clamantes, sed laborantibus celeri succurre placatus auxilio

ist der Anfang *ne despicias* die wörtliche Wiedergabe, die zweite Hälfte die Verarbeitung eines Psalmtextes: *ne despicias* ist Zitat von Psalm 137[138],8; 26[27],9; 54[55],2; für *sed laborantibus...* vergleiche man Psalm 69[70],2: *domine, ad adiuvandum me festina*. Der Text der zweiten Oration eines *Lupercalia*-Messformulars (1052):

<sup>12</sup> Man könnte auch an ein Formular der Fastenzeit denken. Der Gebrauch des Wortes *praesidium* in der Präfation bringt Hope zu der Annahme, dass es sich um ein Formular für Märtyrer handelt (D.M. Hope, *The Leonine Sacramentary. A Reassessment of its Nature and Purpose* (Oxford, 1971), p. 103), aber *praesidium* kann im *Veronense* auch auf andere Unterstützung als durch die Fürsprache eines Märtyrers deuten (s. Index der Ausgabe Mohlberg, Anm. 6), und im Formular findet sich weiter keine Spur von einer Märtyrerverfeier.

<sup>13</sup> Der Wortlaut des Psalmtextes in den beiden hier zitierten Orationen ist mit dem der *Vulgata* und dem des *psalterium romanum* identisch: s. R. Weber, *Le psautier romain et les autres anciens psautiers latins* (Collectanea Biblica Latina 10), Roma, 1953, pp. 38.210. Wo der Tekst des *psalterium gallicanum* (= d.h. der *Vulgata*) zu dem des *psalterium romanum* Unterschiede aufweist, folgen die Zitate im *Veronense* bald der einen, bald der anderen Fassung: aber meistens sind die beiden Fassungen identisch. Im allgemeinen gilt, dass das biblische Material des *Veronense* problemlos mit Hilfe der *Vulgata* analysiert werden kann.

Non retribuas nobis, quaesumus, domine, quae malis operibus promeremur; sed quos iure corripis a veritate digressos, protege tua miseratione correctos

ist Hinweis auf und stilistische Anpassung von Psalm 102[103],10: *Non secundum peccata nostra fecit nobis, neque secundum iniquitates nostras retribuit nobis*. Eine besondere Erwähnung gebührt 483:

Libera nos ab omni malo propitiusque concede, ut quae nobis poscimus relaxari, ipsi quoque proximis remittamus,

weil es ein im *Veronense* sonst nicht vorkommender Embolismus, d.h. ein an die letzten Bitten von dem am Schluss des eucharistischen Hochgebetes rezitierten *Pater noster* direkt anschliessendes Gebet ist (im *Libera nos* der späteren römischen Liturgie lebt der Embolismus fort<sup>14</sup>). Der Text nimmt zwei Bitten wieder auf: im ersten Teil fast wörtlich *Sed libera nos ab malo*, im zweiten in stilisierender Umarbeitung *Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris*.

## 2. Der Bibeltext als Unterstützung der Bitte

In den zitierten Gebeten gehört der Bibeltext zum Kern der Oration: er ist das Gebet selbst. In anderen Fällen hat er, dem eigentlichen, nicht biblisch formulierten Gebet vorangehend oder folgend, als Funktion, die an Gott gerichtete Bitte zu begründen oder zu erläutern. Oft genug wird in den Orationen, um der Bitte grössere Wirkungskraft zu verleihen, auf Gottes Güte und Macht angespielt, ohne dass dafür eine Stelle aus der Bibel herangezogen wird. Manchmal aber, meistens in längeren Orationen, wird ausdrücklich auf einen Bibeltext hingewiesen. So in Kollekte 707 eines Märtyrerformulars:

Onnipotens sempiternus deus, qui sanctis tuis non solum credere in filium tuum, sed etiam pro ei pati posse donasti: nostrae quoque fragilitati divinum praetende subsidium, ut misericordiam sempiternam, pro qua illi felices animas exalarunt, nos saltem sincera confessione mereamur:

um Gottes Hilfe wird gefleht unter Berufung auf Phil. 1,29, über die

<sup>14</sup> Ist der Embolismus hier ein ausnahmsweise bewahrtes Exemplar einer variablen Gebetsformel der römischen Liturgie? Die gallikanische Liturgie hat einen variablen Embolismus, genannt *collectio post orationem dominicam*, wie aus dem *Missale Gothicum* hervorgeht: in der Ausgabe Mohlberg, *Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta. Series Maior. Fontes 5* (Roma, 1961), Nrn. 7. 21. 33, usw.; vgl. auch *Missale Gallicanum Vetus*: in der Ausgabe Mohlberg, *Fontes 3* (Roma, 1958), Nrn. 10. 21. 49, usw.

Christen, denen es nicht nur geschenkt wurde, an Christus zu glauben, sondern auch für ihn zu leiden. Zu vergleichen ist Kollekte 1175 für das Fest der hl. Cäcilia:

Omnipotens sempiterne deus, qui elegis infirma mundi, ut fortia quaeque confundas: da nobis in festivitate sancte martyris Caeciliae congrua devotione gaudere; ut et potentiam tuam in eius passione laudemus, et proviso (provisum?) nobis percipiamus auxilium:

um Gottes Macht zu ehren und seine Hilfe zu erflehen, wird 1 Kor. 1,27 angeführt, wo Paulus schreibt, dass Gott das Schwache in der Welt erwählt hat, um das Starke zu beschämen. Ein sprechender Text ist auch Kollekte 134 (bei Lichte besehen nicht mehr als eine ausführliche Begründung anhand von Matth. 8,2):

Si vis, potens es mundare, domine, et quam vox iniquitatis nostrae non obtinet, tuorum nobis praecibus veniam donare sanctorum.

Man vergleiche auch Kollekte 1111 mit der Zitierung von Apg. 17,28:

Deus in quo vivimus movemur et sumus, pluviam nobis tribue congruentem, ut praesentibus subsidiis sufficienter adiuti, sempiterna fiducialius appetamus.

In Segnungsgebet 467:

Tui sunt, domine, populi, qui ministerium nostrae vocis expectant. Quaesumus clementiam tuam, ut salutaria eius poscentibus, quicquid fiducia non habet depraecantis, gratia tua quae bonorum nostrorum non indiget largiatur

wird am Ende Psalm 15[16],2 angeführt um Gott gleichsam an seine uneigennützig Güte zu erinnern. So stützt Kollekte 437 sich auf Jak. 4,6 und 1 Petr. 5,5.

### 3. *Der biblische Wortschatz in den Gebeten*

Ungeachtet der erwähnten Beispiele ist doch in den Orationen zu wenig Raum für unbekümmertes Zitieren. Gleichwohl fehlt es keineswegs an biblischen Elementen, die bei der Redaktion der Gebetsformeln ihre Verwendung finden. In diesen Gebeten, wie auch in den in dieser Hinsicht den Orationen gleichstehenden Präfationen, findet man auf Schritt und Tritt die biblischen Termini und Ausdrücke, die den Verfassern der liturgischen Texte aufgrund ihrer Beherrschung des christlichen Wortschatzes reichlich zur Verfügung



standen. Die Schwierigkeit für unsere Untersuchung ist die, dass, u.W. jedenfalls, keine tiefschürfende systematische Studie über das umfangreiche einschlägige Material vorhanden ist<sup>15</sup>. Ein kurzer Hinweis auf einige Punkte möge daher hier genügen.

Der Wortschatz des *Veronense* als Sammlung liturgischer Gebete ist von besonderer Art, mit zwei ins Auge fallenden Merkmalen. Einerseits ist das technische Element wichtig, feste Benennungen und Fachausdrücke, bestimmte Formulierungen und Redensarten zur Bezeichnung der Charakteristika des christlichen Lebens, insonderheit des christlichen Gottesdienstes. Andererseits gibt es den euchologischen Aspekt, der den Verfasser öffentlich auszusprechender Gebete dazu veranlasst, sich einer hieratischen Terminologie zu bedienen, mit Wörtern und Ausdrücken besonderer Expressivität oder erhabener Würde. Eine nähere Betrachtung lehrt, dass der biblische Beitrag zu diesen Gebeten sowohl technischer als euchologischer Art ist.

Hinsichtlich des technischen Elements, der biblischen Äusserung als einfache Andeutung, können wir uns kurz fassen. Es handelt sich—in Rechnung ziehend, dass die Grenzen zwischen technischer und euchologischer Verwendung manchmal fließend sind—um eine ganze Menge der Bibel entnommener, fast technischer Benennungen für Sachen, Personen, Begriffe, u.dgl. der christlichen Lebensführung<sup>16</sup>. Das *Veronense* enthält einen reichen Schatz an biblischen Wörtern, die die vielen Aspekte des christlichen Lebens widerspiegeln: *salvator, redemptor, aeclesia, testamentum, diabolus, gentes, fides, creare, creatio, confessio, conversatio, eruditio, pontifex, levita, sacerdos, princeps, proximus, caritas, dilectio, gratia, concupiscentia, tribulatio, afflictio, propitiatio, propitius, miseratio, ambulare* und *currere* in geistlichem Sinn, *iusti* als Andeutung der Märty-

<sup>15</sup> Material in einigem Umfang bieten u.a. G. Manz, *Ausdrucksformen der lateinischen Liturgiesprache bis ins 11. Jahrhundert* (Beuron-Freiburg, 1941); Mary P. Ellebracht, *Remarks on the Vocabulary of the Ancient Orations in the Missale Romanum* (*Latinitas Christianorum* Primaeva 18), <sup>2</sup>Nijmegen, 1966; A. Blaise—A. Dumas, *Le vocabulaire latin des principaux thèmes liturgiques* (Turnhout, 1966); s. auch Hennig (Anm. 6). Zu erwähnen sind auch lexikologische Detailuntersuchungen und Angaben verschiedener Art in Studien liturgiegeschichtlichen Charakters: bibliografische Auskunft hierzu in G. Sanders / M. van Uytanghe, *Bibliographie signalétique du latin des chrétiens* (*Corpus Christianorum. Lingua Patrum* 1), Turnhout, 1989, pp. 91-99; bibliografische Angaben alphabetisch geordnet nach Wörtern und Ausdrücken in H.J. Sieben, *Voces. Eine Bibliographie zu Wörtern und Begriffen aus der Patristik (1918-1978)* (*Bibliographia Patristica. Supplementum* 1), Berlin-New York, 1980, pp. 226-427.

<sup>16</sup> Um den Text nicht allzusehr zu belasten, verweise ich für die jetzt folgenden, oft sehr zahlreichen, Belegstellen der zitierten Termini und Ausdrücke auf den Index der Ausgabe Mohlberg (Anm. 6), und für die biblische Herkunft des Materials auf eine Konkordanz der *Vulgata*.

rer, usw. Zahlreich sind auch die der Bibel entstammenden Redensarten wie *regnum caelorum*, *magister gentium*, *spiritales nequitiae*, *laquei diaboli*, *aliena delicta*, *mundum vincere*, *novissima tempora*, *mors pretiosa*, *abnegare semetipsum*, *crucem tollere*, *misericordiam consequi*, *sperare in deo*, *corripere inquietos*, *multitudo peccatorum*, *consummatio saeculi*, *custodia mandatorum*, *oboedire praeceptis*, *terrena sapere*, *spinae et tribuli*. Zur Andeutung liturgischer Realien dienen aus dem Evangelium und namentlich auch aus den kultischen Abschnitten der alttestamentlichen Bücher *Exodus* und *Leviticus* herührende Termini und Ausdrücke wie *baptizare*, *benedicere*, *benedictio*, *consecrare*, *consecratio*, *sanctificare*, *sanctificatio*, *offerre*, *oblatio*, *hostia*, *hostia placabilis*, *sacrificium*, *immolare*, *facere in commemorationem*, *accipere*. Es wäre nicht schwer, mit Hilfe der vorhandenen Kenntnisse über das 'Latein der Christen' ein langes Verzeichnis von 'biblischen' Wörtern und Ausdrücken, die zum gewöhnlichen Vokabular des *Veronense* gehören, herzustellen, doch dürften die hier angeführten Beispiele genügen.

Etwas länger werden wir uns mit dem euchologischen Element beschäftigen müssen<sup>17</sup>, weil hier sprachliche und stilistische Faktoren verschiedener Art zur Wirkung kommen. Im Hinblick auf eine genaue Betrachtung des biblischen Beitrags erscheint es uns angebracht, auch den anderen, nicht spezifisch biblischen oder christlichen, Elementen Aufmerksamkeit zu schenken. Einige von diesen seien hier kurz erwähnt.

Wichtig ist das Erbe des heidnischen Gottesdienstes, aus dem die christliche Liturgiesprache Imperativi des Flehens wie *adesto*, *adnue*, oft unterstützt durch das klassische *quaesumus*, übernommen hat, sowie allerhand feierliche Wörter wie *libamen*, *supplex*, *tueri*, usw.<sup>18</sup>. Der religiöse Klang aus der Vergangenheit ist ein archaisierendes Element, das den feierlichen Charakter der euchologischen Äusserung unterstreicht. Archaisierend mit derselben stilistischen Absicht ist auch der Gebrauch von allerlei poetischen und anderen nicht der Umgangssprache angehörigen Wörtern wie *seges*, *alimonia*, *claritudo*,

<sup>17</sup> In der Materialsammlung des Manz (Anm. 15) wird der euchologische Aspekt betont.

<sup>18</sup> Für Materialien der heidnischen Kultsprache s. G. Appel, *De Romanorum precationibus* (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten VII, 2), Giessen, 1909, passim, und Frances V. Hickson, *Roman Prayer Language. Livy and the Aeneid of Vergil* (Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 30), Stuttgart, 1993. Über den antik-heidnischen Einfluss auf den christlichen Gebetsstil s. A. Baumstark, "Antik-römischer Gebetsstil im Messkanon", *Miscellanea Liturgica in honorem L. Cuniberti Mohlberg* I (Roma, 1948), pp. 300-331 und Christine Mohrmann, "Quelques observations sur l'évolution stylistique du Canon de la Messe Romaine", *Études sur le latin des chrétiens. III. Latin chrétien et liturgique* (Roma, 1965), pp. 227-244.

*fundamen, munimen, absque, famulari, gratanter*, u.dgl. Von einem Einfluss des Vergilius ist im *Veronense* wenig zu spüren, aber im Ausdruck *spiritum hevetare/hebetare* von Präfation 890: *ne spiritum nostrum obtunsis sensibus hevetemus* vernehmen wir in *hebetare* wahrscheinlich ein Echo der *Aeneis*<sup>19</sup>. Wir dürfen weiter annehmen, dass auch die im späten Kaiserreich stark angeschwollene Höflichkeitsterminologie ihre Spuren hinterlassen hat: man denke an Termini wie *dignari, dignanter, dignatio, militare* (dem Kaiser dienen, der Verwaltung angehören > Gott dienen, an der Liturgie teilnehmen), *obsequium, prosterni*, oder an Redensarten wie *nostra humilitas, nostra servitus, clementer indulgere*, u.dgl. Weiter bekommt eine nicht unbeträchtliche Anzahl von Gebetsformeln eine Art eigene Würde und Eindringlichkeit durch Entlehnung aus einem philosophischen oder irgendwie auf Lebensweisheit abgestimmten Wortschatz, vielleicht mit einem ähnlichen Gedankengang in Verbindung zu bringen, dem wir in bestimmten Präfationen begegnet sind. So fällt der häufige Gebrauch von *substantia* auf, der, zumal in Wendungen wie *humana substantia, corporalis substantia, substantia condicionis humanae, in terrena substantia constitutus, utraque substantia* (*utraque* deutet auf das Zusammengesetzt-sein aus Leib und Seele) u.dgl., mehr philosophisch anmutende als biblisch inspirierte Formeln zustandekommen lässt. Wenn der Mensch *rationabilis creatura* genannt wird, dann ist *rationabilis* nicht das biblische *rationabilis*, λογικός: 'geistlich', 'religiös', sondern das philosophische: 'denkend', 'geistig', 'intellektuell'. Die Bibel hat sporadisch *proficere* im Sinne von 'Fortschritte machen in geistlicher oder sittlicher Hinsicht', aber der Ausdruck *ad divina proficere*, den das *Veronense* in der Bedeutung von 'Fortschritte machen auf dem Weg zum Leben bei Gott, auf dem Weg zum Himmel' verwendet, ist eher eine erhabenen klingende abstrakt-philosophische Formel als eine Reminiszenz aus der Bibel. Die Kollekte eines Fastenmessformulars (193):

Presta, quaesumus, omnipotens deus, ut dignitas condicionis humanae per inmoderantiam sauciata, medicinalis parsimoniae studiis reformatur

verdankt ihren feierlichen Ton nicht zuletzt dem der Würde des menschlichen Lebens entsprechenden, aber nichtbiblischen, Wortgebrauch.

Dennoch ist es schliesslich doch auch die Bibel, die, und zwar in nicht geringem Masse, zur hieratischen Gestaltung des Gebetstextes

<sup>19</sup> *Aeneis* 6,731 sq. über die im Urstand durch leiblichen Kontakt befleckten Seelen: *quantum non (semina)... terreni... hebelant artus*.

beiträgt. Nehmen wir beispielsweise die Anrede an Gott bei Beginn des Gebets: zur Bezeichnung der Attribute Gottes dienen immer wieder bestimmte, den Psalmen und anderen Bibeltexten entlehnte Ausdrücke: *misericors deus, miserator et misericors dominus, domine deus noster, deus salutaris noster, virtutum deus, omnipotens deus, protector in te sperantium deus, pastor bone* u.dgl.: so nachdrücklich an den Anfang gesetzt, machen diese Wendungen das Gebet zu einer feierlichen, an den Gott der Bibel gerichteten Bitte. Erhabenheit und Würde klingen auch in den Benennungen der eucharistischen Gaben an, die die verschiedenen Aussagen des Johannesevangeliums über das Brot des Lebens, das Brot aus dem Himmel, das Fleisch als Speise und das Blut als Trank wiedergeben<sup>20</sup>: *panis aeternus, panis supernus, spiritalia alimenta, vitalia alimenta, dona caelestia, cibus potusque caelestis, cibus sacer potusque salutaris, epulae aeternae salutis*, u.dgl. Manche der Bibel entlehnten Ausdrücke, die ihren hebräischen Ursprung verraten oder irgendwie mit einem affektiven Inhalt beladen sind, wie *spiritus veritatis, misericordia tua, abundantia pacis, lux aeterna, fons vitae, gaudium et corona, dextera tuae maiestatis, oculi maiestatis, duritia cordis, duplici corde, hostia laudis, hostia spiritalis, pietatis sacramentum, novitas vitae, paenitentiae fructus, ieiunia et orationes, divinae naturae consortes*, u.dgl., tragen ebenfalls zur Schaffung der dem öffentlichen Gebet eigenen Atmosphäre bei. Gleichermassen die sehr ausdrucksvollen Hebraismen, die die Bildungen mit *filii* sind: *filii adoptionis, filii promissionis, filii redemptionis, filii veritatis*; verwandt damit ist eine Redensart wie *terra promissionis*. Schliesslich, um eine schon genannte Wendung nochmals anzuführen, *rationabilis creatura* verbindet ein philosophisches Wort mit einem biblischen und zeigt damit, wie im hieratischen Gebetsstil Elemente verschiedener Herkunft harmonisch zusammengebracht werden können. Eine eingehende Analyse der zahllosen Gebetstexte, auch aus anderen *sacramentaria*, könnte noch zu überraschenden Ergebnissen führen, und man kann nur hoffen, dass dieses in seiner Art doch farbige sprachliche Material einmal einer gründlichen Untersuchung unterzogen wird.

Begnügen wir uns vorläufig mit der Schlussfolgerung, dass die Zahl der Orationen, die nicht einen irgendwie biblischen Hintergrund haben, nicht gross ist, dass es aber die stilistische Verarbeitung dieses Materials ist, namentlich in den Verbindungen mit Elementen anderer Art und Herkunft, die dem öffentlichen Gebet der römischen Kirche seine besondere Gestalt verliehen hat.

<sup>20</sup> s. Evang. Joh. 6,48 ff.

## THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY

M. Parmentier

For centuries, the question whether the gifts of the Spirit, as Paul lists them more specifically in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, exclusively belonged to the earliest period of church history or that they are of every age, has attracted the attention of theologians. In this connection a distinction was often made between ordinary and extraordinary, inner and outer, normal and miraculous gifts of the Spirit. Everyday talents such as serving, teaching and being a leader (as in Romans 12: 7-8) did not pose any problems, but 'special', miraculous, powers (as in 1 Corinthians 12: 8-10) did. However, Paul himself does not make such a distinction anywhere and he would surely have rejected it. In our time, interest in the gifts of the Spirit has increased strongly, especially thanks to the growth of pentecostal churches and of the charismatic renewal in the historic churches. But often prejudices and in any case lack of clarity prevail when the history of the operations of the Spirit in the church is discussed. Revivalist circles for example often set out from a theory of decline in the style of Gottfried Arnold and Adolf von Harnack. This theory involves the conviction that a period in which catholicism imposed itself, i.e. a period in which the institutional ministry killed the Spirit given to the people of God, followed the 'spiritual' and charismatic age of the early church. According to the adherents to such theories of decline, this trend continued until the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. But even authors with a more positive appreciation of the tradition of the church sometimes have a curiously pessimistic view of the operations of the Spirit through the ages. As a matter of fact, not very much has been published on the manifestations of the charismata in church history. The only two important recent studies which I know of are the 'Habilitationsschrift' of A.M. Ritter<sup>1</sup> and the dossier *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit* by Kilian McDonnell and George Montague, who are Roman Catholic participants in the charismatic re-

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<sup>1</sup> A.M. Ritter, *Charisma im Verständnis des Joannes Chrysostomos und seiner Zeit* (Göttingen, 1972).

newal.<sup>2</sup> The latter book was summarised in the pamphlet *Fanning the Flame*<sup>3</sup>. What this evidence makes abundantly clear, is that the church fathers are evidently not of the opinion that *all* charismata were limited to the missionary period of the church and that even miracles, however problematic they may sometimes be, have never ceased.<sup>4</sup> Ritter reaches this conclusion in his well-documented study of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, Cyril of Alexandria and especially Chrysostom. This author is especially interested in patristic ecclesiology and the reception of the Pauline concept of charisma. The dossier of McDonnell and Montague has a wider scope and contains sayings of Greek, Latin and Syriac fathers. However, their interest in these matters is determined exclusively by the present situation in the Roman Catholic Church. They want their quotations from the fathers to demonstrate that in patristic times it was normal for the charismata to follow immediately after baptism. In present day pentecostal and charismatic usage this is called the 'baptism in the Spirit', an expression which in ancient times was only used in this sense by the eleventh century Byzantine author Symeon the New Theologian<sup>5</sup>, but which has not become established in theological language until the Methodists and the 19<sup>th</sup> century holiness movements. On the basis of the fact that the 'baptism in the Spirit' was normal in ancient times and assumes the spiritual weakening of the church in our own, McDonnell and Montague argue that "the recovery of the baptism in the Spirit and the charisms is needed in all the institutions of the church".<sup>6</sup>

There is one aspect of the church historical interpretation of the charismata which remains underexposed by both Ritter and McDonnell and Montague. It is the question concerning the background of the distinction (not intended by Paul, but made by numerous church fathers) between ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the

<sup>2</sup> Collegeville, 1991, 2<sup>nd</sup> enlarged edition 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Collegeville, 1991. I made an annotated Dutch translation of this: *Het vuur aanwakkeren* (Boxtel-Brugge, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Concerning the concept of 'miracle' used in this article, cf. M. Parmentier, "Dynamische patronen in genezingswonderen", *Bulletin voor Charismatische Theologie* (= BCT) nr.33, 1994, pp. 48-63. A revised and expanded version of this is "Zur Theologie der Thaumaturgie", *Bijdragen, tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie* 55, 1994, pp. 296-324.

<sup>5</sup> *Catechesis* XXIV,4; SC 113, p.42 etc.

<sup>6</sup> *Fanning the Flame* p.23. Cf. the contributions discussing this book at a conference organised at the Vrije Universiteit (Amsterdam) on 28 April 1993, printed in BCT 32, 1993.

Spirit and especially the definition of those extraordinary gifts of the Spirit which seem to correspond with the phenomenon which in our secularised world we usually call 'paranormal gifts'. In our treatment of this we shall start each time from two Biblical texts, which can serve as a motto illustrating a tension in patristic thought.

*Seven Spirits rest on the Messiah—one Spirit gives gifts to all*

The first pair is Isaiah 11:2-3 and 1 Corinthians 12:11. Isaiah 11:2-3 is the passage about the spirits that shall rest on the coming Messiah. There are, at least in the Septuagint and the Vulgate, seven of them: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and godliness, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord.<sup>7</sup> Apart from the fact that the Holy Spirit is one spirit and that the multiplicity of spirits<sup>8</sup> mentioned by Isaiah should therefore be seen as operations or gifts of the one Spirit, we often meet the idea that what is meant here is a *fullness* of the Spirit which only belonged to Jesus Christ, on whom the Spirit rested at his baptism.

The difference between Christ's and his saints' possession of the Spirit can also be expressed in terms of time. Origen for example devotes a substantial passage to this in the context of his exegesis of Numbers 11:25, where we hear of seventy prophesying elders on whom the Spirit rested temporarily. He indicates that the Spirit was resting in a constant way on the Messiah announced in Isaiah 11 and concludes:

Therefore the Holy Spirit was resting on all those who prophesied, and yet He was resting on none of them in the same way as on the Saviour.<sup>9</sup>

The "sevenfold Spirit who rests on Christ" is also the very first item in the Decretum Gelasianum.<sup>10</sup> The fact that the number seven was widely seen as a number indicating fullness influenced this idea con-

<sup>7</sup> There are six "spirits" in the Hebrew, the last one being repeated in Hebrew and translated in two different ways into Greek. Patristic exegesis of this text has been studied most extensively by K. Schlütz in *Isaias 11,2 (die sieben Gaben des Hl. Geistes) in den ersten vier christlichen Jahrhunderten* (Münster, 1932).

<sup>8</sup> The expression "seven spirits" is used by e.g. Pseudo-Justin, *Cohortatio ad Graecos* 32,3, ed. M. Marcovich, *Patristische Texte und Studien* (= PTS) 32, 1990, p. 69, English translation (= ET): *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (= ANF) I, p. 287.

<sup>9</sup> In *Numeros Homilia* VI,3; *Griechische Christliche Schriftsteller* (= GCS) 30, p. 33,12-14.

<sup>10</sup> Ed. E. von Dobschütz, *Texte und Untersuchungen* (= TU) 38,4 (Leipzig, 1912), p. 21.

siderably.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the resting of the Spirit on Jesus provided a welcome occasion for anti-Jewish polemics: now that the Spirit was resting on Jesus, He had left the Jews. This polemic is already clearly present in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*. Trypho asks how the Messiah can be pre-existent if he has become incarnate, was born human through the virgin, and according to Isaiah 11 had to be filled with the powers of the Holy Spirit, "as if he lacked them". Justin answers:

The Word says that these enumerated powers of the Spirit have not come on him because he stood in need of them, but because they would rest on him, i.e., they would find their completion in him, so that there would be no more prophets in your nation according to the ancient custom—and this fact you plainly perceive. For after him no prophet has arisen among you. Now let me convince you that your prophets, each receiving one or two powers from God, did and spoke the things which we also have learned from the Scriptures. For Solomon possessed the spirit of wisdom, Daniel that of understanding and counsel, Moses that of might and godliness, Elijah that of fear and Isaiah that of knowledge. And so with the others: each possessed one power, or one joined alternately with another. Also Jeremiah and the twelve prophets and David and, in short, the rest which have been prophets among you. Accordingly the Spirit rested, i.e., ceased, when He came after whom, in the times of this dispensation established by Him among humans, the gifts of the Spirit had to cease from you. And having received their rest in Him they would, as had been prophesied, become gifts which, from the grace of his Spirit's power, He imparts to those who put their trust in Him, as He deems each person worthy thereof ... (88) Now it is possible to see amongst us women and men who possess gifts of the Spirit of God. Therefore it was prophesied that the powers enumerated by Isaiah would come upon Him, not because he needed power, but because these would not continue after Him (i.e. with you, Jews!).<sup>12</sup>

The fathers give divergent answers to the question how the Messiah's complete possession of the Spirit is related to the charismata of the Christians. According to many of them, a large measure of spiritual gifts in apostolic times spilled over from the fullness of the Spirit resting on the Messiah. As part of an exhortatory speech, Origen records a weakening of the faith even during his own lifetime, with corresponding results:

<sup>11</sup> Sometimes the number seven provokes far-reaching cosmological speculations, e.g. in Irenaeus, *Demonstration* 9.

<sup>12</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 87,2-88,1, Goodspeed pp.200-201, ET: ANF I, p. 243; cf. O. Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy*, Leiden, 1987, pp. 195-199, 237. For connections with other Biblical numbers seven, cf. Von Dobschütz TU 38,4, pp. 240-241; A. Mitterer, "Die Gaben des Hl.Geistes nach der Väterlehre", *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 49,1925, pp. 529-566, esp. pp. 537-544.



In those days there were believers, when genuine martyrdoms took place, when after accompanying the martyrs to their final rest we went from the cemeteries to the meetings and the whole congregation came together without any fear ... We know that in those days unexpected and wondrous signs were seen. In those days there were few believers, but they were truly believers who travelled the narrow and hard way that leads to life ...<sup>13</sup>

But it seems that Origen also sees a difference between the intensity of the gifts of the Spirit in the time of the apostles and in his own time. He repeatedly speaks of 'traces' of the apostolic gifts of the Spirit. With this he means to say that exorcisms, healings and prophecies still occur in his own time but only brought about by eminently holy people.<sup>14</sup> However, Origen is also a spiritual author with an ambivalent attitude towards physical phenomena and therefore he himself has a preference for 'gnostic charisms' as Ritter calls it.<sup>15</sup> After Origen the authors studied by Ritter completely idealize the operation of the Spirit in the time of the apostles.<sup>16</sup> In a nostalgic way they speak about the direct intercourse with God which people in apostolic times supposedly had. Chrysostom compares the Spirit-less church of his own time with

a woman who has fallen from her former prosperous days, and in many respects retains the symbols only of that ancient prosperity; displaying indeed the repositories and caskets of her golden ornaments, but bereft of her wealth.<sup>17</sup>

Justin is one of the fathers who make a clear connection between the gifts of Christ and the charismata of the Christians, as we have seen already. This becomes even more evident through another passage in the *Dialogue with Trypho* in which he is able to mix the gifts of Isaiah 11 with those of Paul's letters:

Therefore, just as God did not inflict his anger on account of those seven thousand men (1 Kings 19:14,18), even so He has now neither yet inflicted judgement, nor does inflict it, knowing that daily some are becoming disciples in the name of Christ, and leaving the path of error; who are also receiving gifts each as he is worthy, illumined through the

<sup>13</sup> *Hom. in Jeremiah* IV,3, SC 232, p. 264

<sup>14</sup> *Contra Celsum* I, 46; SC 132, p.196. II,8; SC 132, p.300 (traces among the Christians, no more miracles among the Jews). VII, 8; SC 150, p. 34.

<sup>15</sup> P.95 note 17.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. p.149.

<sup>17</sup> *Hom.36 on 1 Corinthians* 14, PG 61, 312; ET: *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (= NPNF) 1<sup>st</sup> Series XII, pp. 219-220.

name of Christ. For one receives the spirit of understanding, another of counsel, another of strength, another of healing, another of foreknowledge, another of teaching, and another of the fear of God.<sup>18</sup>

Other authors appear to see the connection between the gifts of Isaiah and of Paul inasmuch as they can identify the spirits of Isaiah 11 as charismata. Thus a catena fragment ascribed to Didymus the Blind boldly speaks of "the seven charismata".<sup>19</sup> But it is only Tertullian who tries to make 1 Corinthians 12 and Isaiah 11 compatible gift by gift. He identifies Paul's word of wisdom with Isaiah's spirit of wisdom; the word of knowledge with the *word* (not the 'spirit' here!) of understanding and counsel; faith with the "spirit of godliness and the fear of God"; the gift of healings and of powers (miracles) with the spirit of strength; and finally prophecy, discernment of spirits, diverse kinds of tongues, the interpretation of tongues jointly as Isaiah's spirit of knowledge. As far as I can see there are no other authors after him who attempt to harmonise the two texts so explicitly.<sup>20</sup>

In the Middle Ages, at least in the West there is a broad current which uses Isaiah 11 to uphold the connection between Christ as the giver of the Spirit and the faithful as participating in that Spirit.<sup>21</sup> But in this period, the charismata of 1 Corinthians no longer are phenomena, which occur in the church at large. The work of the Spirit is recognised especially in the inner operations which the seven spirits of Isaiah 11 seem to reflect well. This is already the case in Maximus Confessor<sup>22</sup> and, as we pointed out, it becomes an important theme in the Latin West.

The counterpart of Isaiah 11 is 1 Corinthians 12:11: "All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each individually as He wills." There seem to be good reasons to assume that a broad spectrum of all kinds of more or less miraculous gifts of the Spirit was characteristic for the early church. This impression is confirmed by the first church fathers. For example, Irenaeus brings as a concrete argument in his struggle with the Gnostics the fact that in order to prove that Jesus is God,

<sup>18</sup> *Dialogue with Trypho* 39,2, Goodspeed pp. 135-136.; ET ANF I, p.214.

<sup>19</sup> I,2; PG 39, 1120C. Cf. also the *Dissertatio contra Iudaeos* X, 665 etc. by an anonymous author of the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century, CCSG 14, p. 228.

<sup>20</sup> *Adversus Marcionem* V, 8, 8; Evans p. 558, ET p. 559.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. e.g. K.Boeckl, *Die sieben Gaben des Heiligen Geistes in ihrer Bedeutung für die Mystik nach der Theologie des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts* (Freiburg, 1931).

<sup>22</sup> *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* 54, CCSG 7, p. 461.

those who are in truth his disciples, receiving grace from him, do in his name perform miracles, so as to further the well-being of other people, according to the gift which each one has received from him. For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have been cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe and join the church. Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions and utter prophecies. Others still, heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole. Indeed, as I have said, the dead even have been raised up, and remained among us for many years. And what more shall I say? Innumerable are the gifts which the church throughout the whole world has received from God, in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and which she exercises day by day for the benefit of the gentiles, neither deceiving anyone, nor cheating them. For that which she has received freely from God, she hands out freely.

In what follows, Irenaeus contrasts pagan and Christian miracles:

Neither does the church do anything by invoking spirits, or by incantations or any other wicked art, but, directing her prayers to the Lord who made all things, in a pure, sincere and straightforward spirit and calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, she has been accustomed to perform miracles for the advantage of humankind, and not to lead them into error.<sup>23</sup>

The actuality of the charismatic dimension is also a constantly recurring theme in Tertullian's work. For example, in order to outwit Marcion, he says:

So then let Marcion put in evidence any gifts there are of his god, any prophets, provided they have spoken not by human emotion but by God's spirit, who have foretold things to come, and also made manifest the secrets of the heart: let him produce some psalm, some vision, some prayer, so long as it is a spiritual one, in ecstasy, which means abeyance of mind, if there is added also an interpretation of the tongue: let him also prove to me that in his presence some woman has prophesied, some great speaker from among those more saintly females of his. If all such proofs are more readily put in evidence by me, and are in full concord with the rules and ordinances and regulations of the Creator, without doubt both Christ and the Spirit and the apostle will belong to my God.<sup>24</sup>

In his *Treatise on the Soul* Tertullian describes an ecstatic-charismatic gathering:

<sup>23</sup> *Adversus haereses* II, 32, 4-5; cf. 31,2; SC 294, pp. 328-330; ET ANF I, p. 409.

<sup>24</sup> *Adversus Marcionem* V,8,12; Evans pp. 560-562, ET pp. 561-563.

For since we acknowledge spiritual charismata, we too have merited to receive prophecy, although coming after John the Baptist. We presently have amongst us a sister to whom charismata of revelations have been allotted, which she experiences in the Spirit by ecstasy amidst the solemnities of the Lord's day in the church. She converses with angels, sees and hears mysterious things, some people's hearts she understands, and to those who wish it she distributes remedies. Whether it was in the reading of the Scriptures, or in the singing of psalms, or in the preaching of sermons, or in the offering up of prayers, by all this materials for visions are given to her.<sup>25</sup>

It is striking that Irenaeus and Tertullian use the occurrence of the charismata as an argument in the struggle for the truth. We do not need much fantasy to realise that apparently charismata could be a dangerous weapon in the struggle between orthodoxy and heresy as these categories were developing. We can imagine that the growing institutionalisation of the church was in great need of checking if not restricting the charismata. Even so, later authors can still speak quite nostalgically about what they regarded as a free charismatic life of the early church. There are many texts about it. For example, Eusebius in his *Church History* quotes Irenaeus as a witness of what was still possible in the second century, but in his opinion no longer so in the fourth century.<sup>26</sup> Gregory of Nyssa lectures the fathers of the council of 381 because their rhetoric gets bogged down and he draws their attention to Syrian ascetics who are unable to philosophise, but able to exorcise and heal.<sup>27</sup> A little later in Syria itself Philoxenus of Mabbug complains bitterly about the sharp contrast between the time of the apostles and his own time. Were things after a few centuries really that bad in the church, or do we rather have a 'topos' here?<sup>28</sup>

### *Prophecy and divination*

*Luke 11:23* and *Mark 9:40*. "He who is not with me is against me" is complementary to "He who is not against us is for us" of Mark. How do we know whether we are dealing with God, the devil or ourselves? Where are the limits of that which is acceptable? These questions are

<sup>25</sup> *De anima* 9,3-4; CCSL 2, p.792; ET ANF III, p. 188.

<sup>26</sup> *Historia ecclesiastica* V, 7; SC 41, p.33 etc.; ET NPNF 2<sup>nd</sup> Series I, pp. 221-222.

<sup>27</sup> *De deitate adversus Evagrium*, *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* IX, pp. 337-338.

<sup>28</sup> *Letter to Patricius* 119, *Patrologia Orientalis* XXX, p. 860.

at stake when we attempt to distinguish true and false prophecy. In modern Spirit-movements, the gift of prophecy is seen as one of the more extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. What we have here is intuitive speech in God's name, in order to interpret the present, but also to indicate the future. The fact that the Old Testament was interpreted as a prediction of Christ's coming and the fact that pagan oracles were held to be predicting the future will no doubt have stimulated the engagement of Christian prophecy with the future.

Another question in the matter of prophecy is the problem of ecstasy. Among ecclesiastical authors, it is really only Tertullian who describes inspired speech as resulting from ecstasy, as the passages quoted above document. Generally speaking, however, there seems to be quite an aversion against ecstatic prophecy, although this seems to have occurred time and again since the Montanists and also with later enthusiasts.<sup>29</sup> As a rule however the Christian prophet speaks in sobriety; ecstatic prophecy is not regarded as Christian.

There were different forms of prophecy in the early church. We find information about semi-official wandering prophets in *Didache*<sup>30</sup>; Hermas teaches us that a form of congregational prophecy must have existed also, in which in principle every member of the congregation could be called to prophesy. In his doctoral thesis J. Reiling has shown lucidly, how Hermas knew a full-scale process of discernment of spirits.<sup>31</sup> The true prophet is recognised as such because the congregation at prayer, which tests him, activates the Holy Spirit in him. The false prophet however is exposed because the congregation at prayer causes the earthly spirit that dwells in him to flee, with the result that he is unable to utter a word. The only surviving written documents about prophecy from the ancient church are 1 Corinthians 12-14 and the Shepherd of Hermas. Origen<sup>32</sup> still knows the two kinds of prophecy—after him this particular gift is passed over in silence. When prophecy and inspired preaching had been identified, it was officially authorized. Only in monasticism this early Christian gift, which comprises a form of clairvoyance<sup>33</sup>, continues. Then it receives a different name: especially the concept of *διόρασις*,

<sup>29</sup> Cf. R. Knox, *Enthusiasm. A Chapter in the History of Religion* (Oxford, 1950).

<sup>30</sup> Chapters 11 and 13; SC 248, p. 184 and 190 respectively.

<sup>31</sup> *Hermas and Christian Prophecy. A Study of the Eleventh Mandate* (Leiden, 1973).

<sup>32</sup> *Commentary on 1 Corinthians 12-14*; ed. in *Journal of Theological Studies* 10, 1909, pp. 31-32.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. e.g. Palladius, *Historia Lausiaca* XVII (Macarius of Egypt), ed. Butler p. 44, line 8.

“through-sight”, as a comprehensive form of spiritual insight, presents itself here.<sup>34</sup>

The counterpart of the Christian gift of prophecy is the undeniable possibility of pagan oracles to know parts of the truth. Authors like Minucius Felix<sup>35</sup>, Cyril of Alexandria<sup>36</sup> and Augustine<sup>37</sup> go to considerable lengths to discredit and belittle these centres of pagan power. The issue is addressed succinctly in a collection of questions and answers which is sometimes ascribed to Justin and sometimes to Theodoret and which probably dates back to the fifth century.<sup>38</sup> The question which is being asked is:

If prophets and apostles have predicted things which are about to happen, such as victories in wars, attacks of the plague and the demolition of temples, but the pagan oracles have also predicted things, how do we know that the former are better than the latter, since the future is predicted on both sides?

The answer that is given is the following:

Both the prediction in words and the outcome in facts originate from the same God, who announced through prophets and apostles what He was about to do. For as through Bileam the diviner He blessed Israel and cursed its enemies, doing both these things by predicting future events, and equally through divination He predicted the capture of Jerusalem to king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, as the prophet Ezekiel says: ‘And the king of Babylon shall stand on the old way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination, to shuffle the rod, to enquire of the graven images and to examine the liver on his right side. And there was divination in Jerusalem ...’ etc. (Ez. 21:21-22), in the same way through pagan diviners He also predicted things which really came to pass. But there is a big difference between prophets and diviners. First, in that prophets and apostles knew, believed in and worshipped the God in whose name they prophesied and because everything which the prophets predicted concerning the wiping out of the pagan gods and oracles and the situation of Christianity came to pass. Second, in that nothing

<sup>34</sup> Cf. I. Hausherr, *Direction spirituelle en orient autrefois*, (Roma, 1955), p. 97 etc.

<sup>35</sup> *Octavius*, ch.26-27; ed. G. Quispel (Leiden, 1949), p. 56 etc.

<sup>36</sup> *De adoratione in Spiritu et veritate*, Patrologia Graeca (= PG) 68, 432D-441B; Dutch translation and discussion in: M. Parmentier, *Goddelijke wezens uit de aarde. Griekse kerkvaders over de ‘heks’ van Endor* (Kampen, 1989), pp. 104-109.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. H.J. Geerlings, *De antieke daemonologie en Augustinus geschrift De Divinatione Daemonum*, doctoral thesis Vrije Universiteit (Amsterdam, 1953); J. den Boeft, lemma ‘Daemon(es)’ in: *Augustinus-Lexikon* 2, pp. 213-222.

<sup>38</sup> CPG 6285, chapter 2, ed. Otto III, 2 p. 4 etc. (Justin); alias chapter 17, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus p. 30 etc. (Theodoret). In our translation we follow the version by (Pseudo-)Theodoret.

which the diviners predicted, either against the truth of God and those who worship Him, or concerning the situation of paganism, has come to pass. A proof of this is the slaying of the Assyrians who were encouraged by their own divination to say: 'Is it without the Lord that I (= Sennacherib) have come up against this land to lay it waste? The Lord said to me: Go up and lay it waste' (2 Kings 18:25). And he went up and in spite of the divination he got killed.

The idea is that when an oracle speaks the truth, it is like Balaam, who proclaims God's word in spite of himself. But it can also happen that God uses an oracle to mislead the enemies of his people, like Sennacherib, in order to eliminate them. Several church fathers admit that the future can also be predicted correctly by the pagans. The solution for this problem is usually, that by attentive observation of what is visible to everyone, or by shameless theft of information, the devil has got hold of the truth.<sup>39</sup> Thus there seemed to be a reasonably conclusive Christian theory to tell prophecy and divination apart. In practice, however, Christians will often have felt the same as the questioner in the quoted text above: How do we know which side is better than the other one, if both predict the future? This problem was an urgent one, since the prophets and the apostles had died and Christian prophets had been silenced after Montanism, but pagan divination was still in existence, if only on the private estates of pagans who were as obstinate as rich.

### *Tongues and languages*

*Acts 2:6* and *1 Corinthians 14:14*. In light of current modern interpretations of the gift of tongues or languages, expositions by the church fathers about the Pentecostal gift of languages in 1 Corinthians 12-14, at least provide, a classic example of the way in which a wrong exegesis has obscured the view on the continuity of this spiritual gift. Cyril of Alexandria is of the opinion that this is the one early Christian spiritual gift which no longer exists in his own time.<sup>40</sup> Chrysostom thinks that it is one of the early Christian charismata that no longer exist.<sup>41</sup> Augustine equally does not know a contemporary gift of tongues.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Reiling, *Hermas*, p. 68 etc., cf. the quotations in the notes on p. 69. Cf. also H.C. Weiland, *Het oordeel der kerkvaders over het orakel*, doctoral thesis (Utrecht, 1935).

<sup>40</sup> *In Sophon.* 3, 9-10; Pusey II p. 228. Cf. Ritter p. 181

<sup>41</sup> *In Ep. I ad Cor.*, Hom. 35; PG 61, 301. Cf. Ritter p. 35.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. note 48.

However, it should be noted that practically every church father reads the affirmations about the tongues of 1 Corinthians 12-14 from the viewpoint of Acts 2. Thus speaking in tongues/languages becomes speaking in real and meaningful languages, even though 1 Corinthians 13:1 makes it quite plausible to explain a language which nobody understands as a language not of human beings but of angels. In the case of Acts 2 'glossolalia' is 'xenoglossy' [or 'xenolalia'] and its purpose is that which is indicated in verse 11: telling all the nations in their own languages the mighty works of God. This speaking in foreign languages is therefore a missionary instrument to unite all nations in the worship of God. One of the best known examples of such a view is a passage in John Chrysostom's homily on 1 Corinthians 12:

This whole place is very obscure, but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to and by their cessation, since these things used to occur but now no longer take place. And why do they not happen now? ... Well, what did happen then? Whoever was baptised immediately spoke in tongues (γλώσσαις εὐθέως ἐλάλει), and not in tongues only, but many also prophesied, and some also performed many powerful works (πλείους δυνάμεις). For since on their coming over from idols, without any clear knowledge or training in the ancient books, they at once received the Spirit when they had been baptised, but did not see the Spirit because He is invisible, therefore grace bestowed concrete proof of its working. And one immediately spoke the language of the Persians, another that of the Romans, another that of the Indians, another again another language. And this made manifest to those outside that the Spirit was in the speaker. Therefore Paul describes it as follows: "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good", indicating the charismata with 'manifestation of the Spirit'. For as the apostles themselves had received this sign first, so also the faithful went on receiving it, I mean, the gift of tongues, and not only this one but also many others. For many used even to raise the dead and to cast out demons and to perform many other such miracles. And they did have charismata, some less and others more. But more abundant than all was the gift of tongues among them.<sup>43</sup>

So Chrysostom interprets Pauline glossolalia as spontaneous xenoglossy, and says that this no longer occurs in his own day. Earlier in the fourth century Gregory of Nazianzus<sup>44</sup> already doubts whether the Pentecostal miracle of the tongues was a miracle of hearing or one of speech and he deems it possible that in fact the glossolalia at

<sup>43</sup> *In Ep. I ad Cor.*, Hom.29; PG 61,230; ET NPNF 1<sup>st</sup> Series XII, p. 168.

<sup>44</sup> *Or.*41, 15; SC 358, pp. 348-350.



Pentecost was a kind of xenoglossy, just as Origen<sup>45</sup> before him came to the conclusion that Paul's glossolalia must have been xenoglossy for missionary purposes.

Are there no early Christian texts in which speaking in tongues/ languages is not dissolved into missionary xenoglossy? Indeed, there are. An example of incomprehensible Spirit language can for example be found in the third century gnostic writing *Pistis Sophia*. It describes how after his resurrection Jesus walks over the waters with his disciples and prays:

'Hear me, my Father, father of all fatherhood, boundless light: aeêiouô iaô aôia ôia psinôther thernôps nôpsither zagourê pagourê nethmomaôth nepsiomaôth marachachtha thôbarrabau tharnachachan zorokothora ieou sabaôth.' And while Jesus said this, Thomas, Andrew, James and Simon the Canaanite were in the west with their faces turned towards the east, and Philip and Bartholomew were in the south turned towards the north, and the rest of the disciples and the women-disciples stood back of Jesus. But Jesus stood at the altar. And Jesus made invocation, turning himself towards the four corners of the world with his disciples, who were all clad in linen garments, and saying: 'iaô iaô iaô.' This is its interpretation: iôta, because the universe has gone forth; alpha, because it will turn itself back again; ômega, because the completion of all the completeness will take place. And when Jesus had said this, he said: 'iaphtha iaphtha mounaêr ermanouêr ermanouêr.' That is: 'O father of all fatherhood of the boundless spaces, hear me for the sake of my disciples whom I have led before you, that they may have faith in all the words of your truth, and grant everything for which I shall invoke you; for I know the name of the father of the treasury of the light.'<sup>46</sup>

Especially the last section of this quotation reminds us very much of charismatic meetings in which someone prays loudly in tongues, with repetitive sounds, after which an interpretation follows which for some obscure reason is much longer than the utterance in a tongue itself. But this kind of glossolalia was no privilege of the Gnostics. Irenaeus for example says the following about the gift of tongues/ languages:

... we hear of many brethren in the church possessing prophetic charismata and speaking all kinds of languages through the Spirit, usefully revealing the secrets of humans and explaining the mysteries of God ...<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> *Comm. in Ep. ad Rom.* I, 13; ed. with German translation *Fontes Christiani* 2/1, p. 128 etc.

<sup>46</sup> Chapter 136; GCS 45, pp. 232-233; ET G.R.S.Mead 1896, pp. 295-296.

<sup>47</sup> *Adversus haereses* V, 6, 1; SC 153, p. 74; ET ANF I, p. 531.

“All kinds of languages”, “revealing ... secrets ...” and “explaining ... mysteries ...”: could this refer to both comprehensible languages and incomprehensible languages coupled with prophetic interpretations? It may well be that the gifts of prophecy, of tongues/languages and the words of knowledge and wisdom are linked together here. Evidently what is hinted at is not specific xenoglossy, but “all kinds of languages”, i.e. all kinds of means of communication which have a prophetic and a pastoral function, either by itself or as the result of an interpretation. In the same way the passage from Tertullian’s *Treatise on the Soul* quoted above speaks of a woman with “charismata of revelations” who speaks with angels.

Now we must ask whether the phenomenon of wordless praise, which was known in congregational life during the first two centuries, had become so completely obsolete in later centuries that the church fathers began to identify glossolalia and xenoglossy? Infact, the opposite was the case. Precisely because the church fathers interpreted the glossolalia of 1 Corinthians 12-14 as the xenoglossy of Acts 2 instead of the other way around, the glossolalia which was still abundantly present in the church, but which, as we shall see below, was called by a different name, was no longer recognised as such.

The most telling example of both the exegetical misunderstanding that glossolalia is xenoglossy, and of the factual experience of glossolalia, is Augustine. Completely in line with his fellow church fathers, on the one hand he dryly observes:

The Holy Spirit is said to be given by the laying on of hands ... but the Holy Spirit is not only given by the laying on of hands with the testimony of temporal and perceivable miracles, as He was given in former days to recommend the first beginnings of a rudimentary faith and of the church which had to be extended. For who expects in these days that those on whom hands are laid in order that they may receive the Holy Spirit should immediately begin to speak in tongues?<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, at the end of his life Augustine retracts his idea that the extraordinary charismata were only meant for the beginnings of the Christian era, in order to combine deeds with the apostolic words. He changes his opinion on this point because of the miraculous healings that take place in his diocese. Miracles still oc-

<sup>18</sup> *De baptismo contra Donatistas* II,XVI,21; CSEL 51, pp. 212-213; ET NPNF 1<sup>st</sup> Series IV, pp. 442-443.

cur, even now that the whole world has been converted, as he notes in *The City of God* XXII.<sup>49</sup>

Augustine is also entirely familiar with tongue speaking as wordless praise. It only has a different name. Augustine, and many mystical authors after him, calls tongue speaking *jubilatio*. In his *Expositions on the Book of the Psalms*, he writes the following:

‘Sing to him in jubilation’<sup>50</sup>. That is singing well to God, chanting in jubilation. What is chanting in jubilation? That is to understand, to be unable to explain with words what the heart is singing. For when those who chant, whether in the harvest, or in the vineyard, or in some other fervent work, after having begun to exult for joy in the words of songs, are as it were filled with such a joy that they cannot express it with words, they turn away from the syllables of words and change to the sound of jubilation. Jubilation is a sound that signifies that the heart is pregnant with something that cannot be spoken. And to whom is this jubilation due than only to the ineffable God? For that one is ineffable whom you cannot describe with words. And if you cannot describe Him with words and you must not be silent about Him, what else remains than that you jubilate, so that the heart rejoices without words and that the immense latitude of joys is not limited by syllables? ‘Sing well and in jubilation’.<sup>51</sup>

So Augustine knows jubilation as a secular phenomenon of people who spontaneously burst out in tongue speech. Tongue speech is not necessarily a charisma. But Augustine finds the wordless jubilation exceptionally suitable for the praise of God, who is the ineffable One. After him an entire mystical tradition in the Western church knows of jubilation as wordless praise of God.<sup>52</sup>

Only when glossolalia and xenoglossy are identified can it be maintained that the charisma of tongues has died out. As such, the phenomenon of xenoglossy does actually sometimes occur today, but in Christianity it plays no role, as the church fathers demonstrate.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Cf. F.van der Meer, *Augustinus de zielzorger* (Utrecht/Brussel, 1947), p. 463 etc. = *Augustine the Bishop* (London, 1961).

<sup>50</sup> Ps. 32(33):3.

<sup>51</sup> *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 32,8; CCSL 38, p. 254.

<sup>52</sup> In the Roman Catholic charismatic movement, the link between jubilation and tongue speaking was first made by Paul Hinnebusch O.P., *Praise a Way of Life* (Ann Arbor, 1976).

<sup>53</sup> Xenolalia has a particular history in the North American Pentecostal Movement. Charles Parham C who is associated with the doctrine that the gift of tongues forms the necessary initial evidence that someone is baptised in the Spirit—taught permanent xenolalia as the only proper manifestation of tongues-speech. His group still holds to this belief. Initially, Pentecostals sent missionaries to different parts of the world believing they had been given the language of a given nation(s). This was

But speaking in tongues as wordless praise, as a prayer when words to pray fail and as an instrument for silent intercession 'under one's breath' is a continuous phenomenon in Christian tradition, from the first Pentecost until now.<sup>54</sup>

### *Outer and Inner Healing*

*Mark 16:17-18* and *Luke 17:21*. The outward signs that will follow the faithful contrast with the kingdom of God that is "within you". The difference between outward and inward, or extraordinary and ordinary gifts is most poignant where the gift of physical healing is concerned. Moreover in this area there always was the necessary competition from the non-Christian camp and therefore something that looked like a gift of the Holy Spirit could relatively easily seduce to apostasy.

Healing had been an important instrument in the ministry of Jesus and the apostles, but afterwards an extensive manifestation of gifts of healing is no longer mentioned. We have already seen that Irenaeus mentions it as a gift occurring in congregations. Justin makes a close connection between healing and exorcism.<sup>55</sup> In his *Apostolic Tradition*, Hippolytus pleads for the recognition of members of the congregation with a healing ministry:

If anyone says. 'I have received a gift of healing by a revelation', hands shall not be laid on him, for the facts themselves will show whether he has spoken the truth.<sup>56</sup>

Now it is striking how this text varies in its diverse adaptations, especially regarding the caution required for the church to incorporate such a personal ministry.<sup>57</sup> But in the writings of the later church

predicted by 19<sup>th</sup> century figures, some Wesleyan and some not. No pentecostal reported success. When the Charismatic Movement arose in the United States, there was a like emphasis on xenolalia among Protestant Charismatics and Roman Catholic Charismatics. Although not expected in every service, many Pentecostal churches have many stories to tell of how (temporary) xenolalia was a key to deliverance... (Information kindly supplied by Dr. Harold D. Hunter, Oklahoma City).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. M.Parmentier, "Das Zungenreden bei den Kirchenvätern", *Bijdragen, tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie* 55, 1994, pp. 376-398.

<sup>55</sup> *Second Apology* 6, ed. M.Marcovich p.146; ET ANF I, 190.

<sup>56</sup> Hs.14 (Dix 15); ed. B.Botte 1963, p.32; ET G.J.Cuming, *Hippolytus: A Text for Students*, Grove Books (Bramcote Notts. 1976), p. 15.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. M.Parmentier, "Wat is genezing? Gedachten naar aanleiding van een tekst van Hippolytus", BCT 14, 1984, pp. 5-17.

fathers physical healing, which can be demonstrated by 'facts', hardly plays a role. What is very important and much discussed, is inner healing. In monastic and hagiographic literature, however, all kinds of charismata and also physical healing are clearly present, although we find the necessary warnings that this special gift can easily lead to a pride which can make one swell. Quite illustrative for this are the admonitions of John Cassian, which seem to be amazingly topical in view of certain developments in the modern charismatic movement:

The working of signs and wonders (*opera ... signorum atque virtutum*) is not always necessary, not good for all, nor granted to all ... For he can perform all the miracles which Christ wrought, without danger of being puffed up, who follows the gentle Lord not in the grandeur of his signs but in the virtues of patience and humility. But he who aims at commanding unclean spirits or rendering healing to the sick, or showing some wonderful sign to the people, even though in his ostentatious performance he invokes the name of Christ, yet he is alien to Christ, because with his proud mind he does not follow the teacher of humility ... He said ...: 'By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another' (John 13:35) ... He says not: 'If you do signs and wonders in the same way', but: 'If you have love for one another', and this is a love which certainly only the humble and meek can keep .... And so if anyone does any of these things in our presence, he ought to be praiseworthy to us not from admiration of his signs, but from the beauty of his life (*de ornatu morum*), nor should we enquire whether the demons are subject to him (cp. Luke 10:20), but whether he possesses the members of love (*caritatis membra*) which the apostle describes (cp. 1 Corinthians 13:4 etc.).<sup>58</sup>

The signifying character of the gift of healing is always emphasised strongly. Many examples could be given of this. For example that of the Egyptian desert father Benjamin. In his *Lausiac History* Palladius reports how this holy man, after having reached the perfection of asceticism at the age of eighty, received a gift of healing,

so that everyone on whom he laid his hands or to whom he gave oil after blessing it was cured of every ailment. Now this man who was counted worthy of such a gift, eight months before his death developed dropsy, and his body swelled so greatly ... that another man's fingers could not get round one finger of his hand. We turned our eyes away, being unable to look owing to the terrible nature of the affliction. Then that blessed Benjamin said to us: 'Pray, children, that my inner man may not become dropsical.'<sup>59</sup> For my outer man neither benefited me

<sup>58</sup> *Conlationes* XV, 7; SC 54 pp. 217-218; ET NPNF 2<sup>nd</sup> Series XI, p. 448.

<sup>59</sup> I.e. puffed up with pride.

when it was well, nor harmed me when it was ill.' During these eight months a seat was arranged for him, very wide, in which he sat continually, being no longer able to lie down owing to the other requirements of his body. But while he was in this state of affliction he healed others ... When he died, the lintels and door posts were removed, that his body might be carried out of the house, so great was the swelling.<sup>60</sup>

In an entirely different time and place the same is expressed in the biography of Ansgar, who was archbishop of Bremen in the ninth century. "Innumerable people were healed by his prayer and anointing with sacred oil", writes Ansgar's biographer Rimbart,

for many reported that sick people not only from his own diocese, but even from far away strove to come and ask him for the medicine of salvation (*medicinam salutis*). He himself, however, always preferred to hide all this rather than to make it known. Thus when someone in his presence once made a speech about these signs and wonders, he himself said to one of his servants: 'If I were worthy of it with my Lord, I would ask that he would allow me one special sign, namely that by his grace He would make a good man out of me'. Moreover, although he led such a life, he laboured almost continuously by the infirmity of his own body. Indeed, almost his whole life was a martyrdom ...<sup>61</sup>

From Syria to Gaul spiritual leaders also fear the possibility that the distress of physical illness will bring people to deny their faith, seek help from non-Christian healers and lose their salvation. Thus the fourth century Syriac *Book of Steps* says:

But concerning all temptations let us beseech the Lord as it is written 'The Lord heals every disease' (Ps. 103:3). And concerning 'the speech of the lips of evildoers' (Ps. 59:13), that is, of sorcerers, diviners, charm-ers, inscribers of amulets, enchanters and augurs: He will judge them and condemn them. But if you want to be healed without sin, wait on the Lord, make supplication to Him and He will heal you from the many sicknesses, caused by human beings and by Satan. If you must be healed in this world, our Lord will heal you in this world. And if He does not heal you in this world, this is the way in which you will receive help: in this world He will give you rest, lift you up and make you joyful, because you wait for his salvation until your departure from this world. Do not tremble at the afflictions of your sickness so much, that you go and kill your soul for the sake of your body's health. Your body is either cured or it is not cured. It is better for you to bear some small temporal

<sup>60</sup> *Historia Lausiaca* XII, ed. C. Butler pp. 35-36; ET W.K. Lowther Clarke 1918, pp. 66-67.

<sup>61</sup> *Vita Anskarii* auctore Rimbarto '39-40, rec. G. Waitz, Hannover 1884, p. 74. Cf. M. Parmentier, "Wat mogen wij verwachten van de dienst der genezing?", *Charismatische Informatie* 13, 1995, p. 1.

affliction than to go to immeasurable affliction. Even if it were so that your body were cured by those impostors, do you not know that your soul becomes sick, with a sickness that will last until the Day of Judgement and that you will be condemned there and then, because you have evaded the sicknesses and afflictions of a short time, and you will come to an affliction from which you cannot run away, because you have transgressed the commandment of God? But when you are sick and there is a healer near you, ask him as follows: 'Are you not a sorcerer or an enchanter or one of those who occupy themselves with false and erroneous teaching? Let the Lord to whose judgement we shall go, testify against you if you bring me any relief, except directly in the name of Jesus. And if not, stay away from me!' Let him assure you that he heals you in the name of Jesus and then let him come to you.<sup>62</sup>

The same fundamental reservation is also expressed by Caesarius of Arles, who calls on people who are sick to come to the church in order to receive the Eucharist and the anointing of the sick and not to run to pagan healers. The opposite party will not procure a real healing even when this seems to be the case. When they receive physical healing, the devil will kill their soul in any case.<sup>63</sup> Gregory of Tours provides several examples of healers inside and outside the church who go astray.<sup>64</sup>

It is nowhere clearer than in the case of gifts of healing, that Christians must both beware of pseudo-charismata and also that charismata cannot be an end in themselves, but always serve to edify the Body of Christ. In other words: again and again we come across paranormal possibilities which can seduce the believers to adopt other systems of signification. However, it can also happen that charismata begin to lead their own lives. Then they threaten the Body of Christ from within.

### *Gifts and virtues*

*Matthew 5:48* and *1 Corinthians 12:7*. The monastic movement took up

<sup>62</sup> *Liber Graduum* VII,14. Ed. M.Kmosko, *Patrologia Syriaca* I, 1, (Paris, 1926), pp.169-173.

<sup>63</sup> *Sermo* 50,1-2; CCSL 103, pp. 224-226. 52,5-6; CCSL 103, pp. 232-233. 184, 4-5; CCSL 104, pp. 750-751. Vgl. D.Harmening, *Superstitio. Überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1979), p.246.

<sup>64</sup> *Vitae Patrum* 10; *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi* (= MGH I), II p. 255 e.v.; 15, MGH I, II p. 270 etc. *De virtutibus S. Iuliani* 46a, MGH I, II, pp.131-132. *Historiae* IX, 6, MGH I, I pp.417-420; X, 25, MGH I, I pp. 517-519. Cf. M.Parmentier, "Genezing, in wiens naam?" BCT 36, 1995, pp. 25-36.

the demand to be perfect from the Gospel of Matthew. Even so the charismata are given without respect of persons. They are *gratiae gratis datae*, according to an expression which according to Pope Benedict XIV, who in the eighteenth century extensively occupied himself with the charismata<sup>65</sup>, stems from Alexander of Hales.<sup>66</sup> Christianity from the beginning paid much attention to the life style of her members, but monastic tradition laid specific emphasis on the requirement to be holy. Here charismata and virtues are closely joined together.<sup>67</sup> Charismata without a corresponding growth in holiness are a dangerous possession. On many occasions the church fathers stress the necessity for spiritual gifts and growth in holiness to go together, because otherwise accidents may happen. Being gifted is in itself no standard for measuring the religious orientation of the gifted person. For in fact each charisma has its parallel outside the life devoted to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Father of Jesus Christ. The wisdom of the philosophers corresponds with the charismatic spirit of wisdom and understanding. The sayings of the oracles correspond with Christian prophecy. The gift of tongues as a language of angels is a gift which occurs in all religions, and usually in an ecstatic form. Pagan healers compete with the Christian ministry of healing.

Therefore there is one gift, which must occupy a central place in charismatic life: the gift of distinguishing the spirits. In Christian tradition, this gift initially discerns good and bad spirits, angels and demons. In monasticism this gift is interpreted psychologically (but not exclusively). The διακρίσεις τῶν πνευμάτων, the "discernments of spirits" of 1 Corinthians 12:10 become a διάκρισις, a single spiritual discernment. John Climacus devotes the 26<sup>th</sup> step of his "Ladder" to the gift of discernment. For beginners, discernment is "real self-knowledge". For the advanced, "it is a spiritual capacity to distinguish unfailingly between what is truly good and what in nature is opposed to good". For the perfect, "it is a knowledge resulting from divine illumination, which with its lamp can light up what is dark in others". In short, Climacus says, discernment is "a solid understand-

<sup>65</sup> *Heroic Virtue: A Portion of the Treatise of Benedict XIV on the Beatification and Canonization of the Servants of God*, Vol. III (London, 1852), p. 88.

<sup>66</sup> The Reformers later used the expression *gratia gratis data* to emphasise the free and unmerited character of divine grace.

<sup>67</sup> This is also a point of special interest to Ritter: cf. p.31, 55, 56, 132, 134, 139, 158, 195 of his book.



ing of the will of God in all times, in all places, in all things". And: "it is found only among those who are pure in heart, in body, and in speech", people who have "an uncorrupted conscience" and a "pure perception".<sup>68</sup> John Cassian, who also knows powerful charismatic works from his own experience, shows clearly how miracles in themselves mean nothing, because Satan can work them also. What matters is love. The imitation of Christ does not consist in the imitation of his signs, but in the imitation of his patience and his humility. Referring to the sayings of Abba Nesteros, Cassian distinguishes three reasons why people are given the gift of healing: 1. Because of holiness: when the grace of signs accompanies certain elect and righteous men. This was the case with the apostles and many of the saints. 2. For the edification of the church or on account of the faith of those who bring their sick, or of those who are to be cured: then even sinners and people unworthy of it can be used as instruments of healing. However, in this case it may happen that if those who bring their sick or who want to be cured themselves have insufficient faith, the healing may not be realized. 3. By the deceit and contrivance of demons who imitate real healing: when an evident sinner is regarded as a saint out of admiration for his miracles. Such 'healers' are not only unworthy, they are criminal and proud characters. They belong to the categories of false christs and false prophets, who by their deceptive miracles try to seduce people to follow strange gods.<sup>69</sup>

Thus it seems that the extraordinary gifts which correspond with the phenomenon which in our (post-) modern world is usually designated as 'paranormal gifts' was wholeheartedly accepted in the early church if they were used in holiness and if they led those who allowed themselves to be influenced by them to God in the church. However, as soon as these gifts came into conflict with the behavioural code, the doctrine and the representatives of the Christian church, and seemed to seduce those who allowed themselves to be influenced by them and to adopt other systems of signification, they were regarded as pernicious and demonic. In any case it was clear that no single extraordinary gift could be trusted at face value: a process of careful discernment within the Body of Christ inspired by the Holy Spirit always remained the first requirement.

<sup>68</sup> PG 88, 1013AB: ET C. Luibheid and N. Russell (London, 1982), p. 229.

<sup>69</sup> *Conlationes* XV, 1; SC 54 pp. 210-211; ET NPNF 2<sup>nd</sup> Series XI, pp. 445-446.

## LE CARACTERE ET L'EVOLUTION DES IMAGES BIBLIQUES DANS L'ART CHRETIEN PRIMITIF

A. Provoost

Il paraît facile de donner un exposé concernant les images bibliques dans l'art chrétien primitif. Nous disposons en effet d'un grand nombre d'études générales et nous pouvons de plus consulter des encyclopédies, des manuels et des articles qui traitent, parfois même de manière exhaustive, des divers symboles, personnages et récits bibliques (et cela même du point de vue iconologique).<sup>1</sup>

Et pourtant, il y a un problème. En général, on ne tient pas suffisamment compte dans l'évaluation globale de l'importance quantitative d'un sujet. Mais les défauts les plus graves se situent au niveau qualificatif: on se limite souvent aux données anecdotiques de la narration ou du personnage. On se noie ainsi presque toujours dans une multitude de récits et de symboles, en oubliant qu'une approche anthropologico-sociologico-psychologique peut les réduire à un nombre limité de thèmes fondamentaux qui correspondent eux, au véritable contenu de la Bible, parce que spirituel.

Il faut aussi noter que la plupart des études concernant les images bibliques s'appuient sur la méthode de l'histoire de l'art. L'iconographie des premiers chrétiens est ainsi considérée comme 'paléochrétienne', c'est-à-dire comme un langage iconique immature, qui devait attendre l'apogée de l'art byzantin ou médiéval pour devenir compréhensible. Les archéologues par contre considèrent la culture matérielle des premiers chrétiens (et donc aussi leur langage iconique) comme une phase autonome, comme une période d'incubation dans le vrai sens du mot. En outre, l'histoire de l'art, l'histoire ecclésiastique et la théologie inclinent à traiter l'iconographie biblique comme l'illustration par images d'un exposé essentiellement historique ou dogmatique. L'argumentation ne s'appuie que partiellement sur le langage iconique. Mais dans l'archéologie moderne, on se rend de plus en plus compte que les représentations forment une manifestation spécifique du comportement humain dans le passé.

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<sup>1</sup> On trouvera les publications les plus importantes, parfois citées en abrégé, pp. 100-101.

Dans cet article, nous fixerons d'abord notre attention sur les résultats de la recherche traditionnelle concernant les images bibliques: nous présenterons la théorie des paradigmes, et ensuite l'évolution du langage biblique d'après cette vision traditionnelle. Puis, nous essaierons de faire une esquisse alternative (à savoir plus archéologique) de l'évolution du langage biblique. Quelques applications serviront de preuve pour légitimer la vision alternative. En fin d'exposé, nous récapitulerons les données principales dans quelques conclusions.

## 1. *Caractère des images bibliques d'après la théorie des paradigmes*

### 1.1. *Point de départ de la théorie des paradigmes*

Erich Dinkler a repris la théorie des paradigmes à l'occasion de l'exposition prestigieuse *Age of spirituality* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, novembre 1977-février 1978).<sup>2</sup> Toutes les scènes paléo-chrétiennes seraient, sous une forme directe ou indirecte, des représentations bibliques abrégées, illustrant l'histoire du salut.

#### 1.1.1. *Parallélisme avec les prières de salut et les lectionnaires*

Le langage iconique paléochrétien s'appuierait entièrement sur les prières de salut. Ce terme vise les prières liturgiques partiellement conservées jusqu'à nos jours. Il s'agit avant tout de la *commendatio animae* ('La recommandation de l'âme', lors du départ vers l'éternité), qu'on retrouve toujours dans les prières pour les défunts. Dans ces prières, on demande instamment que l'âme du défunt soit libérée, en se référant aux exemples vétérotestamentaires de salut et de libération. Plus explicites encore sont quelques autres prières, par exemple celles attribuées à saint Cyprien.

Dans quelques publications, on mentionne aussi les lectionnaires: une sélection de lectures bibliques destinées aux catechumènes pendant les quarante jours de leur préparation aux sacrements d'initiation: baptême, confirmation et eucharistie (avec la vigile pascalle comme couronnement). Il s'agirait des récits vétéro- et néotestamentaires suivants: l'arche de Noé; le sacrifice d'Isaac; le miracle du

<sup>2</sup> Voir: K. Weitzmann, *Age of spirituality. Late antique and early Christian art, third to seventh century*, catalogue d'exposition (New York, 1977-1978).

rocher (Moïse ou Pierre); Jonas; Daniel; les trois jeunes gens dans la fournaise; Suzanne; le Bon Pasteur; la Samaritaine; la guérison du lépreux, du paralytique et de l'aveugle; la résurrection de Lazare; la multiplication des pains.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.1.2. *La concordance typologique*

La base de cette interprétation est la concordance typologique: on veut inculquer une idée aux chrétiens en recourant à un événement de l'Ancien Testament, qui peut être considéré comme le prototype de cette idée. On est allé encore plus loin au moyen âge. Les prototypes vétérotestamentaires furent confrontés aux antitypes néotestamentaires. L'Ancien Testament était vu comme la préfiguration du Nouveau Testament. Le résultat final de ce processus se voit dans la *Concordia Veteris et Novi Testamenti* du moyen âge ('Concordance entre l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament'). La *Biblia Pauperum* ('Bible des pauvres') de la fin du moyen âge a rendu cette manière de voir populaire à l'intention des prêtres et des laïcs pieux qui n'avaient pas le temps ou l'intérêt pour étudier la Bible de manière approfondie ou qui étaient trop pauvres pour acquérir une Bible complète.<sup>4</sup> Une 'Bible des pauvres' était une sorte de brochure (en général une impression xylographique, comportant non seulement des illustrations mais aussi des textes) concernant les principaux événements de l'histoire du salut. Dans une espèce de palmarès, quarante à cinquante illustrations étaient pourvues de textes, qui expliquaient la cohérence intime entre l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament. On voit par exemple dans une 'Bible des pauvres' originaire de Haarlem (*fig. 1*), une impression xylographique datant de 1430 environ, où la Résurrection du Christ est associée avec Samson qui supporte les portes de la ville de Gaza (Juges 16,3) et avec Jonas émergeant de la gueule du monstre marin (Jonas 2,11); de même les femmes près du tombeau vide, sont mises en relation avec Ruben regardant fixement le puits d'où Joseph a disparu (Genèse 2,11) et avec la femme sunamite pleurant son fils décédé (2 Rois 4,18 ss.)

<sup>3</sup> Voir par exemple: P. Post, "Reis en kijk: op zoek naar de doop in de vroeg-christelijke kunst", *Werkmap voor liturgie* 17,2-3, mei 1984: *De doop van de volwassenen* 3-83, *G en S* 13 33 038, 1983, pp. 91-92.

<sup>4</sup> Voir par exemple: H. Cornell, *Biblia pauperum* (Stockholm, 1925); H.Th. Musper, *Die Urausgaben der holländischen Apokalypse und Biblia Pauperum* (München, 1961).



Fig. 1. Deux pages de la Bible des pauvres de Haarlem, datant d'environ 1430. Cf. *Grote Winkler Prins* 3, 1967, p. 741: fig.

### 1.1.3. Les paradigmes du salut

E. Dinkler soutient que dans les prières citées (dont il reconnaît que les plus anciennes ne datent que du V<sup>e</sup> siècle)<sup>5</sup>, mais aussi dans les représentations des catacombes et des sarcophages, on invoque Dieu en se référant à des exemples d'actes de salut (lesdits paradigmes du salut): Jonas dans le ventre du monstre marin, Daniel dans la fosse aux lions, Suzanne guettée par les vieillards, le miracle de Cana, la guérison par le Christ de l'aveugle, du muet, du paralytique et d'autres. E. Dinkler est persuadé que dès le début du III<sup>e</sup> siècle il y avait des formules de prière qui évoquaient les miracles opérés par Dieu, et qu'elles remontaient en fin de compte à des prières juives.

La coupe de Podgoritz (fig. 2) conservée au Musée de l'Ermitage (Saint-Petersbourg) et datant probablement du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle, a joué un grand rôle dans la mise au point de la théorie des paradigmes. On a même avancé explicitement que les représentations de la coupe montrent une sorte de compendium du répertoire iconique paléochrétien.<sup>6</sup> Le médaillon central fait voir Abraham lors du sacrifice d'Isaac. Les scènes qui entourent ce médaillon présentent d'abord

<sup>5</sup> Voir aussi: P. Post, o.c., pp. 97-98. Les *lectionaria* les plus anciennes sont probablement encore plus récentes.

<sup>6</sup> Voir par exemple: P. Post, o.c., pp. 88-90; H. Beck—P.C. Bol (eds.), o.c., p. 325.



Fig. 2. Coupe de Podgoritz, conservée au Musée de l'Ermitage (Saint Petersburg). Probablement IV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Cf. H. Beck—P.C. Bol (eds.), o.c., p. 325: fig. 142.

Jonas jeté à la mer, puis Jonas avalé par le monstre marin et enfin Jonas couché à l'ombre de l'arbre. Les autres tableaux se rapportent à Adam et Eve, à la résurrection de Lazare, au miracle du rocher, à Daniel dans la fosse aux lions, aux jeunes gens dans la fournaise et à Suzanne. Les inscriptions, rédigées en latin populaire et alternativement en capitale et en minuscules, ne laissent pas de doute quant à l'interprétation: 'DIVNAN DE VENTRE QUETI (= ceti) LIBERATUS EST' ('Jonas est sauvé du ventre du monstre'—près du cycle de Jonas); 'ABRAM ETE EVAM' ('Abraham et Eve'—près d'Adam et Eve); 'DOMINVS LAZARVM resuscitat' ('Le Seigneur ressuscite Lazare'—près de Lazare); 'Petrus virga perquodset (= percutit) / fontes ciperunt quorere (= currere)' ('Pierre bat avec sa baguette, la source commence à couler'—près du miracle du rocher); 'DANIEL DE LACO LEONIS' ('Daniel [sauvé] de la fosse au lion'—près de la fosse aux lions); 'TRIS PVERI DE IGNE CAMI (= camini)' ('Les trois jeunes [sauvés] du feu de la fournaise'—près de la

fournaise); 'SVSANNA DE FALSO CRIMINE' ('Suzanne [sauvée] de l'accusation fausse'—près de Suzanne).

### 1.2. *Explicitation de la théorie des paradigmes*

Je vais maintenant expliciter brièvement ces théories traditionnelles.<sup>7</sup>

Le répertoire iconographique paléochrétien se serait développé en partant de la foi dans la rédemption par le Christ (*Christus salus mundi*—'le Christ, salut du monde'). Cette idée centrale serait présentée de diverses manières, et éclairée sous des aspects variés:

- a. Par des scènes qui montrent la préparation de la rédemption: les sauvetages miraculeux du peuple juif dans l'Ancien Testament, qui sont autant d'interventions de Dieu pour son peuple en détresse.
- b. Par des tableaux qui font voir la réalisation de cette rédemption, c'est-à-dire scènes du Nouveau Testament, surtout les miracles du Christ.
- c. Par des représentations qui montrent la communication de cette rédemption: représentations du baptême, de l'imposition des mains, de l'eucharistie, scènes d'enseignement (*traditio legis*—remise de la loi).
- d. Par des scènes qui montrent le couronnement de la rédemption: le Bon Pasteur, tableaux paradisiaques (y compris les divers éléments bucoliques), Christ en gloire.

Cette manière de considérer les choses peut être qualifiée de biblique (directement ou indirectement) et permet un système symbolique qui ordonne l'ensemble de l'iconographie chrétienne. Nous en décrivons les traits principaux:

- a. Une première série de représentations a un caractère allusif, suggérant les divers aspects de l'histoire du salut. Ces scènes ne sont par conséquent pas exclusivement narratives, et certainement pas voulues exclusivement comme des représentations historiques (comme P. Styger l'a prétendu). Elles sont conçues comme des préfigurations, des allusions, des références à des aspects de la rédemption. Les représentations de Jonas par exemple illustrent de manière clairement symbolique la situation pénible de l'homme et le fait qu'il a été

<sup>7</sup> Voir par exemple: L. Reekmans, *Vroegchristelijke en laatantieke archeologie en kunst* (Leuven, 1978), pp. 125-129; P. Testini, *Le catacombe romane e gli antichi cimiteri cristiana in Roma (Roma cristiana 2)* (Bologna, 1966), pp. 265-278: "il linguaggio simbolico"; F. van der Meer, o.c. pp. 199-235; J. van Laarhoven, o.c. pp. 14-30.

salvé par l'intervention miraculeuse de Dieu (la même signification vaut d'ailleurs aussi pour les miracles). L'interprétation de la plupart des autres cycles va dans le même sens: Noé dans l'arche; Isaac menacé par le couteau sacrificiel d'Abraham; les trois jeunes gens dans la fournaise; Suzanne menacée par les vieillards; Daniel dans la fosse aux lions; Tobie et le poisson; le passage de la Mer Rouge. Tous ces tableaux rendent de manière symbolique l'idée de la rédemption.

b. A côté de ces représentations à caractère symbolique général, il y a aussi toute une série de figures et motifs qui peuvent être appelés des symboles spécifiquement chrétiens.

1°. Motifs d'origine païenne qui ont reçu une signification chrétienne:

– Le Bon Pasteur:

Ce symbole, qui a une longue préhistoire dans l'iconographie païenne<sup>8</sup>, est devenu très vite un motif chrétien (et même le plus ancien), présumant une relation avec le Bon Pasteur de la Bible. Situé dans un paysage bucolique, la scène suggérerait une situation paradisiaque.

– Orphée:

Le Christ est considéré comme le véritable Orphée, parce que lui aussi est descendu dans les enfers ('la descente aux enfers' des chrétiens), non pour sauver un seul homme, mais pour libérer une multitude de gens. Et comme Orphée a séduit hommes et animaux avec son chant et musique, le Christ attire lui aussi les hommes par son message.

– Amour et Psyché:

L'interprétation chrétienne de ces symboles de l'amour et de l'âme est mise en doute par beaucoup de savants.

– Les saisons:

Ce symbole du renouveau continu de la nature correspond à l'idée de la résurrection.

– Le phénix:

Pour cet oiseau mythique, qui serait brûlé tous les cinq cents ans et serait ressuscité de ses propres cendres, l'interprétation comme symbole de la résurrection est évidente.

<sup>8</sup> Voir par exemple: Klauser, "Studien".



– Le paon:

Symbole d'éternité, parce que la chair du paon (l'animal qui était l'attribut de Junon) était considérée comme impérissable.

– La grappe de raisins et les ceps de vigne:

Ils représentent l'eucharistie, ou encore l'Eglise (voir l'Evangile de Jean: 'Je suis la vigne, et vous, les sarments').

– La palme:

La palme est un symbole de triomphe (et non un symbole du martyre, comme on a pensé d'abord).

## 2°. Des symboles explicitement chrétiens:

– La croix sous ses diverses formes

– Le chrisme et les monogrammes du Christ:

La forme de base est constituée par les deux premières lettres—X et P—du nom grec du Christ. Parfois le chrisme est combiné avec l'alpha et l'oméga, la première et la dernière lettre de l'alphabet grec. Dans le monogramme du Christ, la lettre P est pourvue d'une traverse. Dans une autre forme, on combine les lettres I et X (de Iesus et de Christos).

– Le poisson:

Ce symbole, déjà répandu dans l'Antiquité, fut interprété comme celui du Christ, parce que le mot grec *Ichthus* était formé des premières lettres de *Iesus Christos Theou Huios Sôter* (= Jésus Christ, Fils de Dieu et Sauveur). Cette interprétation est confirmée par des témoignages littéraires, comme la stèle d'Abercius (datant de 216) et des propos de Tertullien (environ 160-220).

– L'agneau:

Le symbole de l'agneau est manifestement polyvalent: le Christ comme Agneau de Dieu; les Apôtres disposés autour du Christ comme douze agneaux (voir l'apside de S. Apollinaire in Classe à Ravenne); l'agneau entre deux loups, comme la chaste Suzanne menacée par les vieillards.

– L'orante:

Cette figure symbolique, qui comme le Bon Pasteur a une longue préhistoire, aurait été pour les chrétiens l'âme des défunts, adorant et remerciant Dieu et priant pour les vivants.

– La colombe (éventuellement avec un rameau):

Pour certains, la colombe représenterait l'âme des défunts. D'autres voient dans la colombe avec un rameau l'équivalent figuratif de la

formule IN PACE ('en paix'), si caractéristique des inscriptions funéraires.

– L'ancre:

On trouve déjà l'ancre comme symbole sur les plus anciennes inscriptions funéraires. La signification semble être double: symbole de la croix et symbole de l'espérance (du paradis).

### 1.3. *Quelques considérations sur cette manière de voir traditionnelle*

Du point de vue de l'iconographie chrétienne médiévale et moderne, cette vision traditionnelle semble très fondée.<sup>9</sup> Il est clair que la plupart de ces interprétations étaient universellement répandues au plus tard dès le début du moyen âge, et peut-être déjà au milieu du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle. La moindre des choses qu'il faut reconnaître c'est qu'il s'agit de significations potentielles, pour lesquelles on retrouve dans les représentations des arguments solides.

Mais le problème est qu'il ne suffit pas de connaître les significations potentielles des représentations paléochrétiennes. Il faudrait être sûr que ces significations étaient actualisées, qu'elles étaient perçues comme telles. Pour le dire d'une manière plus concrète, il faut chercher des arguments dans les témoignages littéraires, le contexte iconographique et le contexte matériel en général pour savoir si les paradigmes bibliques ont vraiment joué un rôle prépondérant dans la genèse et l'évolution du langage iconique paléochrétien.

Parlons d'abord de quelques témoignages littéraires qui traitent directement des représentations. Même au IV<sup>e</sup>/V<sup>e</sup> siècle, on ne trouve que peu d'indices pour la validité de la théorie des paradigmes. A ce propos, on cite toujours l'homélie d'Asterius d'Amasée<sup>10</sup> et les lettres de Paulin de Nole<sup>11</sup>. Mais ce qu'on oublie toujours, c'est que ces témoignages reflètent surtout la vision de ces bienfaiteurs/bâisseurs d'églises, et pas nécessairement des chrétiens moyens qui ont visité les églises en question. Il est significatif qu'on ne trouve jamais des reflets de ces interprétations élevées dans les simples graffiti, les inscriptions funéraires ou les inscriptions sur les objets usuels. Par contre, on dispose d'un témoignage d'environ 200 qui présume une tout autre conception à propos des représentations des

<sup>9</sup> Voir par exemple: J.J.M. Timmers, o.c. et d'autres précis à caractère de répertoire, cités p. 101.

<sup>10</sup> Voir par exemple: F. van der Meer, o.c., pp. 27-28.

<sup>11</sup> Voir par exemple: F. van der Meer, o.c., pp. 258-259.

premiers chrétiens. Il s'agit de la recommandation de Clément d'Alexandrie dans son *Pédagogue* (3,59,2). Clément demande d'abord aux fidèles dont il a la charge de ne plus utiliser, pour décorer leurs gemmes, de signes cryptiques constitués de lettres, d'idéogrammes et de pictogrammes, parce que ceux-ci ont un caractère obscur et même idolâtre. Ceci implique que jusqu'à ce moment il n'était pas question de scènes bibliques, même pas sous une forme abrégée, mais tout au plus de signes bibliques à caractère allusif. Mais l'iconographie biblique est aussi absente des représentations que Clément préfère. Je le cite littéralement:

Les représentations sur nos sceaux doivent être une colombe, ou un poisson, ou un bateau toutes voiles dehors, ou une lyre (l'instrument qu'a utilisé Polycrate), ou une ancre de navire (comme Séleucus a fait graver sur son sceau). Ou si un pêcheur y est gravé, on peut penser à l'Apôtre [Pierre] et aux enfants qui sortent de l'eau baptismale. Qu'on évite les représentations d'idoles: on ne peut pas même les regarder.

Clément ne veut donc pas qu'on remplace les signes obscurs par des scènes—personnes, événements, idées sacrés—qui illustrent l'histoire du salut, comme le prétend la théorie des paradigmes. Il veut par contre des symboles issus du répertoire 'profane' courant, mais susceptibles d'évoquer, pour les chrétiens, une signification plus profonde. Il est évident que la signification plus profonde dont parle Clément pouvait avoir, dans la plupart des cas, une connotation biblique (mais alors seulement dans le sens d'un 'thème' biblique, et pas d'une 'illustration' concrète d'un passage biblique (personnes et événements)).

Le contexte iconique et le contexte matériel en général donnent des indications qui vont dans le même sens. Les scènes bibliques se trouvent presque exclusivement sur les tombes et les objets usuels des hommes cultivés, mais sont très rares sur les objets qui étaient communs aux lettrés et aux illettrés, à savoir les simples dalles funéraires et les lampes<sup>12</sup>. Il est impensable que les paradigmes bibliques aient joui d'une popularité universelle dans les prières et la liturgie de tous les chrétiens, tandis que dans l'iconographie elles auraient été réservées aux gens cultivés. Cela donne à penser que les scènes bibliques étaient choisies au moins partiellement pour leur caractère idyllico-bucolique, qui les rendait très adaptées à la décoration des chambres funéraires et des verres dorés des riches.

<sup>12</sup> Voir: Provoost, "Das Zeugnis", passim.

## 2. *L'évolution du langage iconique paléochrétien, et particulièrement du langage biblique d'après la vision traditionnelle*

A la manière de voir traditionnelle concernant le caractère des images bibliques en correspond une autre concernant l'évolution du langage iconique biblique<sup>13</sup>. Pour la subdivision en deux périodes, il faut noter qu'on suppose que les représentations chrétiennes les plus anciennes datent du début du III<sup>e</sup> siècle.

### 2.1. *Jusqu'au début de la Tétrarchie (285)*

Dans cette première période, l'iconographie chrétienne est de nature très symbolique, avec des représentations comme le Bon Pasteur, des scènes pastorales, l'orante (qui prend souvent les traits du défunt), le pêcheur, l'ancre.

Tout comme sur les sarcophages païens, on trouve aussi souvent sur les sarcophages chrétiens des scènes d'enseignement: les défunts discutent avec un philosophe sur le sens de la vie et de la mort. Du point de vue chrétien, ces représentations visent la vraie doctrine.

Les scènes explicitement bibliques sont peu nombreuses. Quand elles sont présentes, elles sont empruntées plutôt à l'Ancien qu'au Nouveau Testament. Les plus fréquentes sont les représentations de Jonas. Elles expriment l'idée de la rédemption et forment un cycle: Jonas jeté à la mer, Jonas vomé par le monstre marin et rejeté sur le rivage, Jonas couché à l'ombre de l'arbre. D'autres scènes fréquentes sont: Noé dans l'arche; les trois jeunes gens dans la fournaise; Adam et Eve. Les scènes néotestamentaires sont, entre autres, le baptême—parfois celui du Christ (dans ce cas, on y voit une colombe), parfois d'un simple fidèle—; la multiplication des pains; la résurrection de Lazare; le miracle du rocher (avec Pierre); l'arrestation de Pierre. Les deux dernières scènes sont plutôt exceptionnelles.

Les motifs païens et profanes ne font pas du tout défaut. On trouve par exemple souvent des têtes de lions aux angles d'un sarcophage. Ces lions dévorent parfois un chevreuil (symbole de la mort). Il y a ensuite aussi des génies avec une torche renversée, Orphée, la *porta aeterna* (la porte vers la vie éternelle) entrouverte. On trouve aussi beaucoup de scènes de banquets. Leur signification est fort contestée: banquet funéraire? repas eucharistique? illustration de l'idée du

<sup>13</sup> Voir par exemple: L. Reekmans, o.c., pp. 129-132.

*refrigerium* (situation intermédiaire entre la vie et la mort)? ou encore allusion à la multiplication des pains? La signification symbolique des saisons a déjà été mentionnée. Les motifs païens et profanes sont encore plus fréquents sur les couvercles des sarcophages: monstres marins et dauphins, génies au repos, scènes pastorales, scènes de chasse et de banquet. Mais ils cèdent progressivement la place à des motifs plus chrétiens.

Comme motif central le buste des défunts est assez recherché; ce motif était également populaire sur les sarcophages païens. Sur les couvercles des sarcophages, ces portraits sont sur fond d'un *parapétasma* (draperie) tenu par deux génies.

La représentation la plus ancienne de la Sainte Vierge (vers 200 ou dans les premières décennies du III<sup>e</sup> siècle) se trouverait dans la catacombe de Priscille. Elle est assise comme une matrone romaine, avec l'enfant sur les genoux. A côté d'elle, un homme, peut-être le prophète Balaam, tend la main vers une étoile au-dessus de sa tête (allusion au passage biblique: "Voici, qu'une étoile s'élève au-dessus de Jacob" Num. 24,17).

## 2.2. Pendant la Tétrarchie et le règne de Constantin (285-335)

Les motifs païens et profanes disparaissent tout à fait à cette période. Mais on trouve toujours sur les couvercles des sarcophages des représentations pastorales, des scènes de banquets, des génies et des tableaux de chasse.

Quelques-uns des motifs symboliques d'autrefois se maintiennent, mais avec une fréquence diminuée: le Bon Pasteur (qui deviendra rare après la période constantinienne); le pêcheur (presque disparu à cette période); l'orant ou l'orante (maintenant combinés avec des scènes bibliques, ou mis entre deux apôtres); des scènes d'enseignement (moins nombreuses pendant la Tétrarchie, elles disparaissent pendant la période constantinienne).

On constate par contre une progression des scènes bibliques, surtout de celles relatives au Nouveau Testament. Quelques représentations vétérotestamentaires restent néanmoins populaires: Isaac sauvé du couteau d'Abraham; les trois jeunes gens refusant d'adorer la statue de Nabuchodonosor; les jeunes gens dans la fournaise; la vision des os d'Ezéchiël (symbole de la résurrection); Tobie avec le poisson; Suzanne menacée par les vieillards; Job sur son fumier; le passage de la Mer Rouge; Daniel entre les lions; l'ascension d'Elie; la

création de l'homme. Parmi les représentations néotestamentaires, les suivantes sont les préférées: la résurrection de Lazare; la multiplication des pains; le miracle de Cana et d'autres miracles du Christ, comme la guérison de l'aveugle, du paralytique, de l'hémorroïsse, la résurrection de la fille de Jaïre; d'autres scènes de l'enfance ou de la vie du Christ, comme la naissance, l'adoration des mages, la menace de lapidation à Nazareth, l'entrée à Jérusalem; et enfin des scènes de la vie de saint Pierre, comme le miracle du rocher, le reniement de Pierre, son arrestation.

Un motif frappant est la représentation, dans un *clipeus* central, de la *dextrarum iunctio* (expression symbolique du mariage).

### 3. *Manière de voir alternative concernant l'évolution du langage iconique paléochrétien, et particulièrement des représentations bibliques*

Les défauts de la théorie des paradigmes peuvent être évités si on refuse de considérer le langage iconique paléochrétien comme un ensemble presque monolithique, et si on y voit l'interaction de divers champs iconiques<sup>14</sup>. Ces champs iconiques ne se sont pas développés tous en même temps ni avec la même intensité—comme le suppose la théorie des paradigmes. De cette manière, il est possible de définir l'importance relative d'une représentation (universelle, plutôt fréquente, plutôt rare, presque unique etc.). Cette approche profite—et c'est plus important encore—des acquis de l'anthropologie culturelle, en classifiant le matériel iconique par contextes archéologico-anthropologiques. Les critères d'une telle classification sont: détermination des utilisateurs et le caractère de l'emploi; la fonction de la représentation; le caractère du porteur (objet usuel, objet de luxe, partie de la décoration d'une maison ou d'une tombe, parure d'un édifice cultuel etc.); la diversité régionale et chronologique (le fait qu'une telle classification reflète la diffusion chronologique et géographique n'est pas un but en soi, mais en est une des conséquences intéressantes).

Je crois pouvoir discerner trois contextes pour la période pré- et protoconstantinienne, et deux autres pour les années qui suivent<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Voir par exemple: Provoost, "Vroeg-christelijke taferelen"; Provoost, "Das Zeugnis"; Provoost, "Embleem".

<sup>15</sup> Voir: A. Provoost, "Les représentations de martyrs à la fin de l'Antiquité", in: M. Lamberigts—P. van Deun (eds.), *Martyrium. Martyrdom in Pluridisciplinary Perspective (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium CXVII)* (1994), pp. 236-240.

### 3.1. *Contexte 1 (environ 30-150)—naissance des signes bibliques et des *personalia* à caractère biblique*

Approche anthropologique:

Temps d'incubation de la chrétienté; des meneurs charismatiques créent des communautés locales dans beaucoup de régions; par les contacts réciproques se réalise un organisme spontané de coordination (= période apostolique)

Culture matérielle:

Les vestiges matériels des chrétiens ne diffèrent pas des *archaeologica* juifs et païens, par manque d'une culture matérielle spécifiquement chrétienne.

Langage iconique:

On ne trouve que des monogrammes, idéogrammes et cryptogrammes (peut-être surtout chez les chrétiens d'origine juive), et peut-être aussi quelques *personalia/realia*. Les signes bibliques et les *personalia* à caractère biblique apparaissent.

### 3.2. *Contexte 2 (environ 180-250)—naissance des emblèmes bibliques*

Approche anthropologique:

Premières formes de dispositions communes: présence d'écrits, églises-maisons comme celle de Doura-Europos, secteurs chrétiens dans les cimetières existantes (ce qui présuppose des corporations funéraires chrétiennes), création des premières écoles et bibliothèques.

Culture matérielle:

On utilise les dispositions existantes, pourvu qu'elles conviennent; on les rend éventuellement plus utilisables par des adaptations légères (voir l'église-maison de Doura-Europos).

Langage iconique:

Naissance des emblèmes idyllico-bucoliques et progression universelle des signes et des *personalia/realia*. Début des scènes bibliques à caractère emblématique.

### 3.3. *Contexte 3 (environ 250-325)—naissance des idylles bibliques*

Approche anthropologique:

Les chrétiens ont connu peu après le milieu et jusqu'à la fin du III<sup>e</sup>

siècle une période de paix relativement longue entre deux persécutions sévères; développement ultérieur des dispositions communes, probablement suivant une stratégie coordonnée par les autorités ecclésiastiques (voir le rôle des évêques/prêtres dans la liturgie et des diacres concernant les enterrements et l'assistance aux pauvres; évergétisme des riches; premiers ermites et début des ermitages et monastères; expansion des écoles et des bibliothèques).

#### Culture matérielle:

On installe des églises dans les maisons des riches, mais on commence aussi à bâtir des constructions nouvelles; les riches à tout le moins disposent d'objets usuels marqués par le christianisme et de cimetières propres.

#### Langage iconique:

La plupart des scènes, dans les chambres funéraires et sur les sarcophages, prennent un caractère explicitement idyllico-bucolique et reflètent ainsi les circonstances de vie des riches; la présence d'orantes et des scènes intellectuelles indiquent que ces riches se voulaient lettrés.

Les emblèmes bibliques se transforment souvent en de vraies idylles.

### 3.4. *Contexte 4 (environ 325-375)—naissance des allégories et des histoires bibliques à caractère spontané*

#### Approche anthropologique:

Le christianisme devient une religion permise, et reçoit grâce aux empereurs et fonctionnaires bénévoles plus de moyens et de possibilités; l'évergétisme devient partiellement une affaire d'état.

#### Culture matérielle:

On bâtit ouvertement des basiliques, baptistères et églises funéraires.

#### Langage iconique:

Interaction entre le langage funéraire et le langage cultuel; l'iconographie des riches est fortement associée aux usages de la cour, et prend un caractère hautement allégorique ou narratif. Les emblèmes bibliques historiés deviennent des véritables scènes historiques, celles plus symboliques des allégories, mais gardent une certaine spontanéité et liberté.



### 3.5. Contexte 5 (après 375)—naissance des *characteres* et *historiae*

Approche anthropologique:

Le christianisme devient la religion officielle de l'état; les administrations profanes et religieuses se confondent de plus en plus; l'Eglise assume en grande partie les fonctions de l'état.

Culture matérielle:

Début du vrai développement de la culture matérielle chrétienne; christianisation de la topographie, d'abord dans les quartiers résidentiels, et plus tard aussi dans les centres officiels; culte omniprésent des martyrs et des saints.

Langage iconique:

Les portraits deviennent de plus en plus des *characteres* (et ensuite des icônes), les scènes narratives des *historiae*, certains emblèmes des allégories compliquées, et d'autres des attributs; les traits essentiels de toutes ces représentations se fixent de plus en plus; la doctrine officielle et le culte de l'Eglise dominent progressivement le langage iconique.

#### 4. *Quelques applications de la cette manière de voir alternative du langage iconique biblique*

Après tout ce qui a été dit, il n'est pas difficile de préciser quelles représentations bibliques on trouve aux diverses périodes, et d'indiquer si certaines représentations étaient préférées. Je me limite à la présentation et à un commentaire sommaire de quatre tableaux de fréquence. Ces tableaux ne mentionnent pas seulement les scènes qui ont un rapport direct avec l'Ancien ou le Nouveau Testament, mais tiennent aussi compte des symboles qu'on qualifie généralement de bibliques (quoique que je sois persuadé que la plupart d'eux sont en premier lieu idyllico-bucoliques). Pour des raisons pratiques, je classe toutes les scènes de banquet parmi les représentations du Nouveau Testament, quoique je les considère presque toutes comme idyllico-bucoliques ou comme de simples *realia*.

##### 4.1. *Fréquence des scènes bibliques par comparaison avec l'ensemble du langage iconique paléochrétien*

4.1.1. *Fréquence des scènes bibliques dans les catacombes romaines*

Voir le *tableau 1*, qui est basé sur l'index de A. Nestori, *Repertorio topografico delle catacombe romane (Roma sotterranea cristiana 5)* (Città del Vaticano-Roma, 1975) pp. 181-218. Il faut néanmoins tenir compte d'une objection fondamentale adressée aux identifications de Nestori: il voit, comme J. Wilpert dans son corpus de 1903<sup>16</sup>, dans chaque berger le Bon Pasteur des Écritures, dans chaque jardin le Paradis terrestre, dans chaque femme avec un enfant la Vierge et l'Enfant Jésus, dans chaque scène de repas la figuration de l'Eucharistie etc. De telles Hineininterpretierungen sont inadmissibles aujourd'hui<sup>17</sup>.

FREQUENCE DES SCENES BIBLIQUES DANS LES  
CATACOMBES ROMAINES

SYMBOLES	AT+NT	AT	NT
185 Animaux	86 Bon Pasteur (criophore)	67 Jonas	65 Résurrection de Lazare
147 Feston	75 Miracle du rocher	54 Daniel	57 Le Christ (par exemple enseignant)
138 Motif floral	27 Pasteur	46 Noé	37 Multiplication des pains
88 Vase	2 Anges	26 Adam et Eve	26 Banquet
15 Corbeille		22 Jeunes gens dans la fournaise	26 Guérison du paralytique
15 Monogramme du Christ		15 Moïse	17 Adoration des mages
14 Croix		13 Abraham (sacrifice)	13 Apôtres (groupe)
12 Guirlande		13 Job	13 Pierre et/ou Paul
10 Etoile		8 Isaïe	11 Baptême
9 Vigne		7 Balaam	8 Miracle de Cana
7 Coquille		7 Suzanne	8 Guérison de l'aveugle
4 Croix monogrammatique		4 Tobie	8 La Samaritaine
4 Fruit		3 Samson	6 Guérison de l'hémorroïse
3 Pêcheur		2 Colonne de feu	4 Agnus Dei
3 Candélabre		2 Elie	3 Scènes de jugement
3 Fontaine		2 Nabuchodonosor	2 Annonciation
3 Bateau		2 Manne	2 Discours sur la montagne
2 Couronne de fleurs		2 Passage de la Mer Rouge	2 St. Jean l'Évangéliste
2 Phénix		1 Abel et Caïn	2 Isaïe auprès de la Vierge
2 Table/autel		1 Aaron	2 Guérison du lépreux
2 Roue		1 Banquet d'Isaac	2 Reniement de Pierre
1 Arbre		1 Création de l'homme	2 Crèche
1 Corne		1 David	2 Vierges sages
1 Palme		1 Absalon	1 Apparition à Pierre
1 Epis de blé		1 Déluge	1 Couronnement d'épines
		1 Ephraïm et Manassé	1 Crucifixion
		1 Juda rencontre Tamar	1 Guérison du lépreux
		1 Joseph	1 Philippe et l'eunuque
		1 Lot	1 La fille de Jaire
		1 Prophète	1 Imposition des mains
		1 Michée	1 Lavement des pieds
		1 Miracle des caillies	1 Les Mages avec l'étoile
		1 Vision de Mambré	1 Guérison du possédé
			1 Guérison de la femme estropiée
			1 Remise des clefs
			1 Tunique de Jésus
			1 Visitation de la Vierge

Tableau 1

<sup>16</sup> J. Wilpert, *Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms* (Freiburg i. Br., 1903).

<sup>17</sup> Pour d'autres exemples, voir: A. Provoost, recension de: A. Nestori, *Repertorio topografico delle catacombe romane (Roma sotterranea cristiana 5)* (Città del Vaticano-Roma, 1975) dans: *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 74, 1979, pp. 377-382.

On voit dans le *tableau 1* (qui donne la fréquence des scènes bibliques dans les catacombes romaines) que les scènes mentionnées dans les prières pour les morts et les *lectionaria* sont bien présentes:

86 Bon Pasteur  
75 Miracle du rocher  
67 Jonas  
65 Résurrection de Lazare  
54 Daniel  
46 Noé  
37 Multiplication des pains  
26 Guérison du paralytique  
22 Les jeunes gens dans la fourmilière  
13 Sacrifice d'Isaac  
8 La Samaritaine  
8 Guérison de l'aveugle  
7 Suzanne  
2 Guérison du lépreux

Mais il est tout aussi clair que toutes les scènes qui, d'après la théorie des paradigmes, auraient dominé le langage iconique paléochrétien, n'ont pas joui d'une popularité comparable. Le *tableau 4* montrera en outre que cette popularité a différé selon les différentes périodes, et que presque toutes ces scènes étaient recherchées dès avant 250, et donc bien avant le développement des prières de libération et des *lectionaria* (dont on a supposé qu'elles auraient été à l'origine de la plupart de ces scènes). Il faut également signaler que différentes scènes qui ne jouent qu'un rôle secondaire dans la théorie des paradigmes, sont présentes avec une fréquence significative, par exemple Adam et Eve, les scènes de banquet, l'adoration des Mages, Moïse qui se déchausse et reçoit la Loi.

#### 4.1.2. *Fréquence des scènes bibliques dans le cimetière 'ad duas lauros'.*

Voir *tableau 2*, basé sur: Provoost, "Das Zeugnis" (cf. n. 1).

#### FREQUENCE DES SCENES BIBLIQUES DANS LA CATACOMBE AD DUAS LAUROS

SYMBOLES	AT+NT	AT	NT
39 Motif central	37 Pasteurs	19 Jonas au repos	17 Banquet
38 Guirlande		19 Noé	17 Résurrection de Lazare
19 Oiseaux		16 Daniel	12 Multiplication des pains
18 Vase		15 Miracle du rocher	12 Guérison du paralytique
13 Colombe		14 Jonas rejeté par le monstre	7 Guérison de l'aveugle
9 Animal de troupeau		12 Jonas jeté à la mer	5 Baptême du Christ
8 Paon		7 Abraham (sacrifice)	5 Guérison de l'hémorroïse
7 Gazelle		6 Jonas affligé	5 Miracle de Cana
4 Arbuste		5 Adam et Eve	5 Adoration des Mages
3 Oiseau avec rameau		5 Job	3 La Samaritaine
2 Dauphin		3 Balaam	1 Les Mages avec l'étoile

2 Candélabre	2 Suzanne	1 Crèche
2 Canard	1 Jeunes gens dans la fournaise	1 Guérison de la femme estropiée
2 Tête de bœlier		
2 Soleil		
1 Etoiles		
1 Lune		
1 Coquille		
1 Panier		
1 Christe		

Tableau 2. Fréquence des scènes bibliques dans le cimetière de Pierre et Marcellin

Le grand avantage du cimetière de Pierre et Marcellin (ou *ad duas lauros*) est qu'on peut être sûr du caractère chrétien et de la datation préconstantinienne des représentations.

Le *tableau 2* confirme les données du *tableau 1*: les scènes de salut sont présentes de manière prédominante, mais certainement pas exclusive. Mais ce qui frappe surtout, c'est la prédominance des symboles à caractère bucolique et des idylles bibliques comme Jonas et Noé (voir contexte 3).

4.1.3. *Fréquence des scènes bibliques narratives: comparaison entre les fresques, les coupes à fond doré, les dalles funéraires et les lampes.*  
Voir *tableau 3*, basé sur: Provoost, "Das Zeugnis".

FREQUENCE DES SCENES BIBLIQUES NARRATIVES SUR  
LES FRESQUES, LES VERRES DORES, LES DALLES FUNERAIRES  
ET LES LAMPES

FRESQUES	VERRES DORES	DALLES FUNERAIRES	LAMPES
AT	AT	AT	AT
19 Jonas au repos	7 Adam et Eve	1 Jonas au repos	1 Jeunes gens dans la fournaise
19 Noé	4 Jeunes gens dans la fournaise	1 Noé	
16 Daniel	3 Miracle du rocher		
15 Miracle du rocher	2 Jonas au repos		
14 Jonas rejeté par le monstre	1 Abraham (sacrifice)		
12 Jonas jeté à la mer	1 Noé		
7 Abraham (sacrifice)	1 Le buisson ardent		
6 Jonas affligé	1 Explorateurs avec grappe		
5 Adam et Eve	1 Tobie		
5 Job			
3 Balaam			
2 Suzanne			
1 Jeunes gens dans la fournaise			
NT	NT	NT	NT
17 Banquet	39 Pierre et/ou Paul	1 Résurrection de Lazare	
17 Résurrection de Lazare	13 Le Christ		
12 Multiplication des pains	6 Résurrection de Lazare		
12 Guérison du paralytique	5 Multiplication des pains		
7 Guérison de l'aveugle	2 Miracle du rocher (Pierre)		

5 Baptême du Christ	2 Guérison du paralytique
5 Guérison de l'hémorroïsse	2 Miracle de Cana
5 Miracle de Cana	1 Crucifixion
5 Adoration des Mages	
3 La Samaritaine	
1 Mages avec l'étoile	
1 Crèche	
1 Guérison de la femme estropiée	
1 Agnus Dei	

Tableau 3

Cette comparaison des fréquences est tout à fait étonnante. Les scènes bibliques semblent se limiter presque exclusivement au milieu des riches et des gens cultivés (cf. les fresques et les verres dorés), et manquer sur les objets utilisés par les chrétiens moins fortunés (dalles funéraires, lampes). Les scènes bibliques n'appartiennent donc que partiellement à la koinè, au langage iconique universel. Puisqu'il est impensable que les prières pour les mourants et les leçons liturgiques n'aient été destinées qu'aux gens cultivés, il faut en conclure que les représentations bibliques ne sont pas tributaires de ces prières (comme le suppose la théorie des paradigmes).

#### 4.2. *Continuité ou évolution?*

Voir le *tableau 4*, basé sur: A. Provoost, *Iconologisch onderzoek van de laat-antieke herdersvoorstellungen*, dissertation doctorale K.U. Leuven, 1976, non publiée

#### FREQUENCE DES SCENES BIBLIQUES DANS LE CONTEXTE DES SCENES PASTORALES

Avant 250	250-320	320-350	Après 350
<i>Symboles</i>	<i>Symboles</i>	<i>Symboles</i>	<i>Symboles</i>
27 Oiseaux	88 Motif floral	45 Motif floral	39 Motif floral
15 Motif floral	77 Oiseaux	31 Oiseaux	17 Oiseaux
15 Poissons	53 Vigne	19 Jardin	16 Vigne
10 Ancre	38 Jardin	11 Vigne	16 Jardin
7 Vigne	18 Paon	11 Paon	12 Croix/monogramme
7 Etoiles	17 Vie rurale	8 Animaux de troupeau	10 Paon
6 Oiseau avec rameau	16 Oiseau avec rameau	7 Animal bondissant	9 Vie rurale
6 Croix/monogramme	13 Animaux de troupeau	6 Vie rurale	5 Oiseau avec rameau
5 Paon	12 Lion	5 Oiseau avec rameau	5 Animaux de troupeau
5 Dauphin	11 Dauphin	5 Croix/monogramme	5 Animaux domestiques
5 Pain	9 Poissons	4 Bassin/fontaine	5 Source
4 Jardin	9 Pêcheur à la ligne	3 Dauphin	3 Poissons
4 Pêcheur à la ligne	8 Animaux domestiques	3 Animaux domestiques	2 Dauphin
4 Soleil	6 Croix/monogramme	3 Source	2 Pêcheur à la ligne
3 Animaux de troupeau	6 Etoiles	2 Poissons	2 Etoiles
3 Animal bondissant	6 Animal bondissant	2 Soleil	2 Lion
2 Vie rurale	5 Ancre	1 Etoiles	2 Bassin/fontaine

2 Bassin/fontaine	5 Pain	1 Lion	1 Pain
1 Animaux domestiques	4 Source	1 Pain	1 Soleil
	3 Soleil		
	2 Bassin/fontaine		
<i>AT</i>	<i>AT</i>	<i>AT</i>	<i>AT</i>
10 Jonas au repos	47 Jonas au repos	18 Jonas au repos	15 Miracle du rocher
7 Jonas rejeté par le monstre	36 Jonas jeté à la mer	12 Jonas jeté à la mer	16 Daniel
5 Jonas jeté à la mer	33 Jonas rejeté par le monstre	21 Miracle du rocher	12 Jonas au repos
4 Daniel	24 Daniel	12 Noé	11 Abraham (sacrifice)
4 Noé	21 Miracle du rocher	10 Daniel	9 Jonas jeté à la mer
2 Miracle du rocher	19 Noé	7 Job	8 Noé
2 Abraham (sacrifice)	9 Adam et Eve	6 Jonas rejeté par le monstre	8 Adam et Eve
1 Adam et Eve	9 Jeunes gens dans la fournaise	5 Adam et Eve	6 Jonas rejeté
	9 Jonas affligé	5 Jeunes gens dans la fournaise	4 Jeunes gens dans la fournaise
	7 Adoration des Mages	5 Jonas affligé	3 Jonas affligé
	6 Abraham (sacrifice)	4 Abraham (sacrifice)	2 Job
	2 Job		
<i>NT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>NT</i>
6 Scènes d'enseignement	78 Scènes d'enseignement	24 Scènes d'enseignement	21 Scènes d'enseignement
5 Résurrection de Lazare	21 Résurrection de Lazare	13 Résurrection de Lazare	11 Résurrection de Lazare
4 Banquet	14 Banquet	5 Multiplication des pains	5 Multiplication des pains
3 Baptême	13 Multiplication des pains	7 Baptême	4 Guérison du paralytique
2 Guérison du paralytique	12 Guérison du paralytique	3 Banquet	4 Adoration des Mages
		3 Guérison du paralytique	1 Banquet
		2 Adoration des Mages	1 Baptême
		1 Baptême	

Tableau 4

On peut espérer que ce *tableau 4* soit plus ou moins représentatif de l'ensemble du langage iconique paléochrétien, puisque le champ iconique des représentations idyllico-buciliques est presque omniprésent (fresques: 96%; dalles funéraires: 67%; lampes: 47%; verres dorés: 64%)<sup>18</sup>. Le tableau prouve que les sujets bibliques—qu'ils aient eu un caractère symbolique ou narratif—sont apparus dès le début. Il n'est pas question que les représentations de l'Ancien Testament aient dû céder progressivement devant celles du Nouveau Testament, comme on le dit dans l'optique traditionnelle. L'équilibre entre les scènes vétéro- et néotestamentaires reste à peu près constant.

### 5. *Quelques conclusions*

La théorie des paradigmes ne semble pas tenable, ni pour l'ensemble du langage iconique paléochrétien en général, ni pour les scènes bibliques en particulier. Il y a évidemment beaucoup de représentations bibliques qui évoquent ou montrent l'histoire du salut, mais elles ne sont pas du tout exclusives.

<sup>18</sup> Voir: Provoost, "Das Zeugnis" passim.

Il faut plutôt accepter que les sujets bibliques se sont transformés en même temps que le contexte anthropologique: d'abord des signes bibliques et des *personalia* à caractère biblique; puis des emblèmes et idylles bibliques; et finalement des allégories et des histoires bibliques, premièrement avec caractère spontané, plus tard comme *characteres* et *historiae*.

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## EARLY CHRISTIAN ILLUSTRATED GOSPEL BOOKS FROM THE EAST

### I. Spatharakis

Most of the early illustrated Gospel books from the East date from the sixth century. Although their number is small, the amount of information they supply is large.<sup>1</sup> They teach us to which subjects preference was given for illustrating and the luxury of their execution, by which the status of the donor is revealed. The miniatures in a manuscript tell us the purpose for which a book was used (liturgy or private use) and betray the influence of the liturgy on the book illustration. They inform us whether an artist invented a scene especially for a Gospel book or copied it from elsewhere. We also learn much about the physical characteristics of the Early Christian manuscripts and especially about the development of the illustrations in them from the so-called *papyrus style*, consisting of several, small scenes mainly in horizontal zones between a text column, to the full-page miniature. They help us to reconstruct lost illustrated Tetraevangelia, which were, as we shall see, decorated with a large number of scenes. They enrich our knowledge about lost monumental painting in early churches, not only as regards the subjects, but also the part of the church in which these subjects were painted. Concerning iconography, on one hand the scenes in these manuscripts form the basis for the further evolution of a subject, and on the other hand include compositions and details which remained unique.

#### *Codex Sinopensis*

Codex Sinopensis, Par. Suppl. gr. 1286, contains fragments from the Gospel of Matthew, written in golden uncial on purple folios.<sup>2</sup> These

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<sup>1</sup> My sincere thanks are due to drs. Gale Bartholf of The Hague for help with the English. For a survey on these books see: K. Weitzmann, *Late Antique and Early Christian Book Illumination* (London, 1977), with colour reproductions and bibliography (hereafter: Weitzmann, *Late Antique*).

<sup>2</sup> Parchment, ff. 43, 30 x 25 cm. It derives its name from the city of Sinope in Pontus, where the captain Jean de la Taille bought it in 1899 from an elderly lady

fragments are illustrated with five miniatures, painted on the lower part of the page. The material used and the miniatures themselves contribute to a luxurious edition of this Gospel book and evidence a wealthy donor. The miniatures represent the Feast of Herod on fol. 10vo (Matthew, 14: 1-12), the first and the second Miraculous Feeding of the Multitude on fols. 11ro and 15ro (14: 13-21 and 15: 29-39), the Healing of Two Blind Men on fol. 29ro (20: 29-34) and the Barren Fig Tree on fol. 30vo (21: 18-22). The scenes are flanked by two prophets holding unfurled scrolls, on which typological texts are written. The first three scenes are flanked by David and Moses, the fourth by David and Isaiah and the fifth by David and Habakkuk. On the upper part of the pages is recorded on which feast the lections written underneath are read. This Gospel book was, thus, used as a Lectionary. The texts written on the scrolls of the Prophets were sung in the liturgy of the feasts which the miniatures show. The Prophets are thereby added to the miniatures under the influence of the liturgy; their presence in the Sinopensis is an early visual example of this influence.

The scene of the Feast of Herod on fol. 10vo (Fig. 1) shows a strong correlation with the corresponding text. A servant hands the head of St. John the Baptist to Salome, as we read in Matthew, 14: 11: "And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel; and she brought it to her mother." We see, thus, no dancing Salome with the head of St. John, as we find her in later representations of the subject. On the right, we see the prison with the headless body of St. John the Baptist and two of his disciples, in accordance with the text of the Gospel: "And he (Herod) sent, and beheaded John in the prison" (Matthew, 14: 10) and a little further on, "And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus" (14: 12). The scene of the Feast of Herod is the earliest scene that has survived from the cycle of the life of St. John the Baptist, whereas the iconography of the prison scene is unique.<sup>3</sup> The style of the mini-

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and sold it next year to the Bibliothèque Nationale. A. Grabar, *Les peintures de l'Évangélaire de Sinope* (Paris, 1948). Catalogue of the exhibition *Byzance et la France médiévale. Manuscrits à peintures de IIe au XVIe siècle*, Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris, 1958), no. 1, pl. A: fol. 10vo in colour (hereafter: *Byzance et la France médiévale*). P. Sevrugian, *Der Rossano-Codex und die Sinope-Fragmente: Miniaturen und Theologie* (Worms, 1990) (hereafter: Sevrugian, *Rossano-Codex*).

<sup>3</sup> On the iconography of the cycle of the life of St. John the Baptist see: E. Sdrakas, *Johannes der Täufer in der Kunst des christlichen Ostens* (Munich, 1943). A. Masseron, *Saint-Jean-Baptiste dans l'art* (Grenoble, 1957). F.-A. von Metzsch, *Johannes*

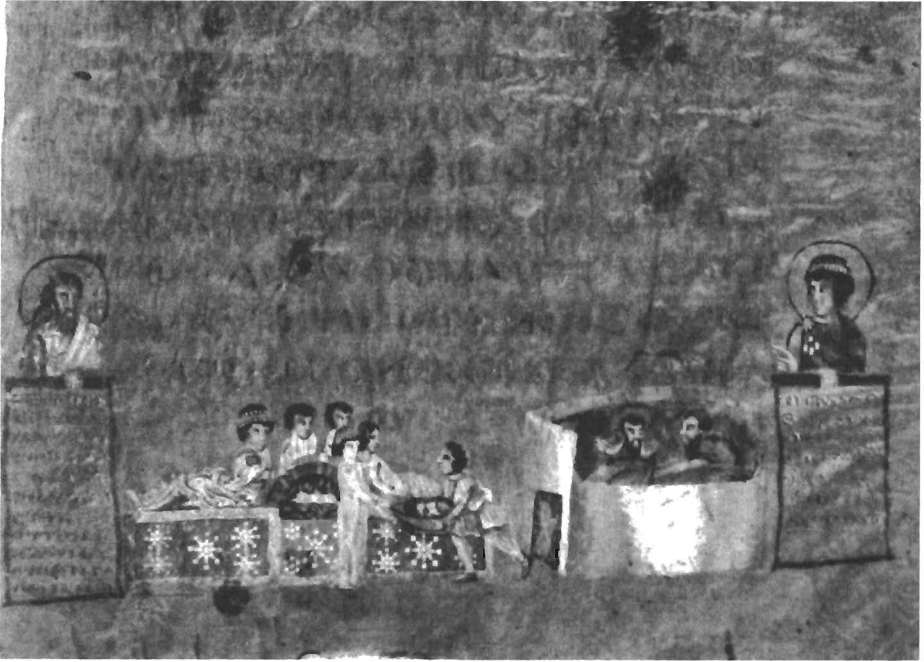


Fig. 1. The Feast of Herod, Codex Sinopensis, Par. Suppl. gr. 1286, fol. 10vo, 6th century.

atures in the Sinopensis is provincial with a great degree of expression, especially perceivable here in one of the disciples of St. John, who raises his hands in consternation. The bloody, headless body of St. John is rendered realistically.

The presence in this codex of scenes, e.g., the Barren Fig Tree, which are less important than scenes like the Nativity or Baptism of Christ, suggests the existence of earlier, lost, illustrated Gospel books, decorated with a great number of miniatures, from which the artist of the Sinopensis could copy selectively. The disposition of the miniatures in the presumed model was not similar to that which we see in the Sinopensis, i.e., one miniature on the lower part of the page, but followed the so-called *papyrus style*, a style which gives the opportunity to the artist to paint a great number of miniatures within the text

*der Täufer. Seine Geschichte und seine Darstellung in der Kunst* (München, 1989). E. Weis, in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, 7, cc. 164-190, esp. 175-189, s.v. *Johannes der Täufer* (hereafter: *LCI*) K. Wessel, in *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst*, III, cc. 616-647, esp. 631-646, s.v. *Johannes Baptistes* (hereafter: *RbK*).

columns.<sup>4</sup> We find it in the papyrus Book of the Dead in Ancient Egypt. Although Christian scrolls from the early period decorated in this style have not survived, a few fragments containing profane texts have indeed done so. Examples of the latter are the so-called *Romance Papyrus*, a second-century fragment in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Suppl. gr. 1294, containing an unidentified text<sup>5</sup> (Fig. 2) and the *Heracles Papyrus*, a third-century fragment in London, the Egypt Exploration Society, found in Oxyrhynchus (Pap. 2331), containing a poem about Heracles, decorated with three consecutive scenes from the story of Hercules and the Nemean lion<sup>6</sup> (Fig. 3). How the early Gospel books decorated in the *papyrus style* must have looked, we see in copies of a later date. An example is the Tetraevangelion Par. gr. 74, painted with hundreds of miniatures in the middle of the eleventh century.<sup>7</sup> The often more than one miniature on a page and more than one scene in a miniature illustrate in cinematographical manner the text of the Gospels, naturally not only the most important, but also the less important scenes from Christ's life.

### *Codex Rossanensis*

Codex Rossanensis, kept in the Archiepiscopal Museum of Rossano in Calabria, is written in silver uncial on purple parchment.<sup>8</sup> We deal, thus, once more with a luxurious edition of the Gospels. The

<sup>4</sup> The origin and methods of text illustration has been studied by K. Weitzmann, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex: A Study of the Origin and Method of Text Illustration* (Princeton, 1947), reprinted with addenda in 1970; for the papyrus style see p. 47 ff. (hereafter: Weitzmann, *Roll and Codex*).

<sup>5</sup> Catalogue of the exhibition *Byzance et la France médiévale*, no. 2, pl. I. Weitzmann, *Roll and Codex*, p. 51, fig. 40. K. Weitzmann, *Greek Mythology in Byzantine Art* (Princeton, 1951), p. 197. K. Weitzmann, *Ancient Book Illumination* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p. 100, pl. LI, fig. 107 (hereafter: Weitzmann, *Ancient Book*).

<sup>6</sup> 235 x 106 mm. K. Weitzmann, in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. XXII, 1954, p. 85 ff., no. 2331, pl. XI. Weitzmann, *Ancient Book*, p. 53, pl. XXVI, fig. 59. Idem, *Roll and Codex*, p. 239, fig. 40a.

<sup>7</sup> H. Omont, *Évangiles avec peintures byzantines du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Reproductions du manuscrit grec de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1908).

<sup>8</sup> Parchment, ff. 188, ca. 307 x 260 mm. The codex is mentioned for the first time in 1845 by a journalist from Naples. On this codex see mainly: A. Muñoz, *Il codice purpureo di Rossano* (Rome, 1907). Weitzmann, *Late Antique*, pp. 88-96, pls. 29-33. *Codex purpureus Rossanensis. Museo dell'Archivescovado, Rossano Calabro*, Facsimile edition with commentary in Italian and English by G. Cavallo, J. Gribomont, W.C. Loerke (Codices selecti phototypice impressi, Vol. 81\*), (Rome, Graz, 1985-1987). Sevrugian, *Rossano Codex*.

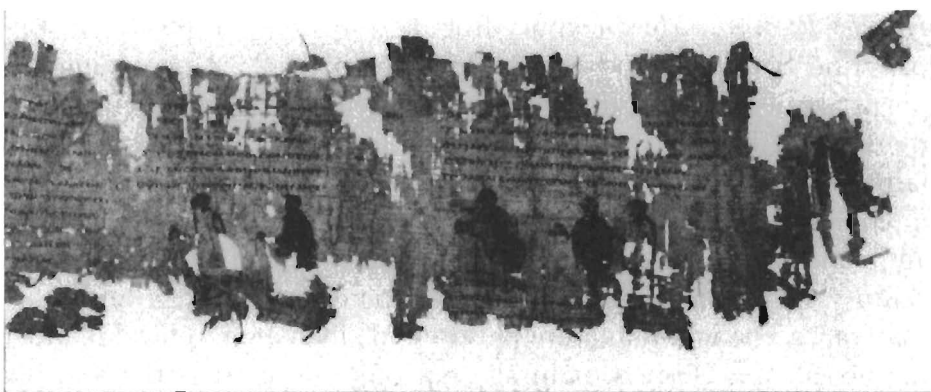


Fig. 2. *Romance Papyrus*, Par. Suppl. gr. 1294, 2nd century A.D.

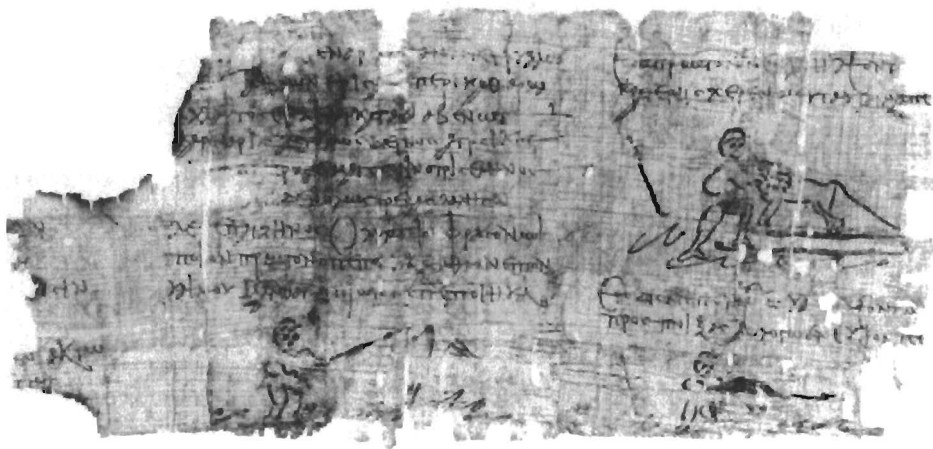


Fig. 3. *Heracles Papyrus*, London, The Egypt Exploration Society (Oxyrhynchos Pap. 2331), Heracles and the Nemean lion, 3rd century A.D.

codex is ascribed to the beginning of the sixth century and variously attributed to a scriptorium of Constantinople, Antioch or Jerusalem. The miniatures decorating it represent the following subjects and are accompanied, usually in the upper part of the pages, by verses from (variants of) the corresponding evangelic lessons:

1. Fol. 1ro: The Resurrection of Lazarus (John, 11: 1-44).
2. Fol. 1vo: The Entry into Jerusalem (Matthew, 21: 1-9).
3. Fol. 2ro: The Cleansing of the Temple (Matthew, 21: 12-13).
4. Fol. 2vo: The Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew, 25: 1-13).
5. Fol. 3ro: The Last Supper (Matthew, 26: 20-24) and the Washing of the Feet (John, 13: 4-11).
6. Fols. 3vo-4ro: The Communion of the Apostles (Distribution of the bread: Luke, 22: 19; Distribution of the wine: Matthew, 26: 27-28).
7. Fol. 4vo: The Agony in the Garden (Matthew, 26: 36-46).
8. Fol. 7ro: The Healing of the Blind from Birth in the Pool of Siloam (John, 9: 1-7).
9. Fol. 7vo: The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke, 10: 25-37).
10. Fols. 8r-8vo: Christ before Pilate (Matthew, 27: 1-26).
11. Fol. 121ro: The Evangelist Mark.

The two scenes showing Christ before Pilate and the portrait of Mark are full-page miniatures. The other scenes are painted horizontally at the upper part of a page, recalling the *papyrus style*; four half-figures of prophets, holding unfurled scrolls with text on them, are painted below the scenes and complete the page. The miniatures do not illustrate the relevant Gospel passages within the codex, but are painted at the beginning of the book, except for the miniature showing the Evangelist Mark, which is placed in front of his Gospel. The scenes are inspired not by one, but all four Gospels. They are related to lections read from the Saturday of Lazarus to Good Friday. The selection and order of sequence represent the Greek liturgy for the Passion week.

The Communion of the Apostles is represented in an unusual disposition, not in one but in two miniatures painted on two folios facing each other<sup>9</sup> (Figs. 4-5). The Apostles are shown standing in

<sup>9</sup> On the iconography of the Communion of the Apostles see: G. Millet, *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Évangile au XIVe, XVe et XVIe siècles d'après les monuments de Mistra, de la Macédoine et du Mont-Athos* (Paris, 1916), pp. 42-46 and 286 (hereafter: Millet, *Recherches*). K. Wessel, *Abendmahl und Apostelkommunion* (Recklinghausen, 1964). K. Wessel, in *RbK*, I, cc. 239-245, s.v. *Apostelkommunion*. E. Lucchesi Palli, in *LCI*, I, cc.



Fig. 4. Communion of the Apostles, Rossano Codex, fol. 3v, 6th century.

two rows, while receiving the bread on the left and the wine on the right from Christ, who is depicted on the outer sides of the folios. Christ is, thus, represented twice, in contrast to another version of the

173-176, s.v. *Apostelkommunion*. W. Loerke, "The Monumental Miniature", in K. Weitzmann, W. Loerke, a.o., *The Place of Book Illumination in Byzantine Art* (Princeton, 1975), pp. 61-97, esp. 78-92, examined in detail both this miniature and that showing Christ before Pilate (hereafter: Loerke, *Monumental Miniature*). Sevrugian, *Rossano Codex*, pp. 59-64, passim.



Fig. 5. Communion of the Apostles, Rossano Codex, fol. 4ro, 6th century.

scene in which he is depicted only once (e.g. in Fig. 6). The group receiving the wine is lead by St. Peter, while that receiving the bread by a beardless apostle, presumably St. John. The figure of St. John may in other representations of the theme be anachronistically replaced by that of St. Paul (e.g. in Fig. 6). The representation of the Communion of the Apostles is not a narrative scene which illustrates a corresponding passage, as is, e.g., the Feast of Herod in the Sinopensis (Fig. 1), but is inspired from the liturgy, i.e., the moment the priest administers the communion to the believers. The texts above the two miniatures showing the Communion of the Apostles



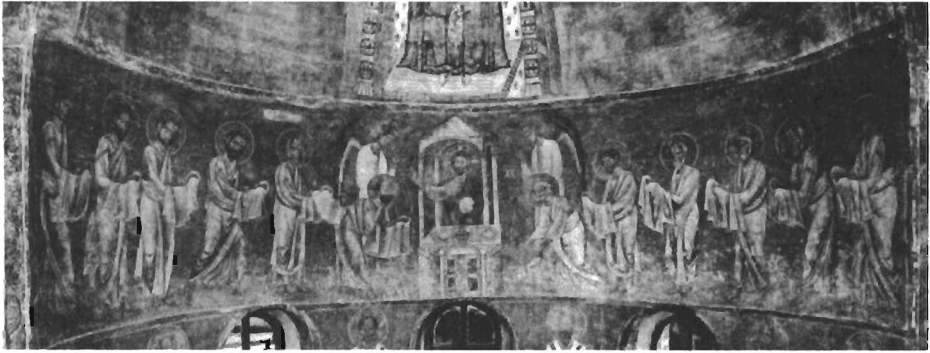


Fig. 6. Communion of the Apostles, Santa Sophia, Ochrid, ca. 1040 A.D.

are abbreviated versions of the relevant passages from the New Testament (Matthew, 26: 26-29; Mark, 14: 22-24; Luke, 22: 19-20; 1 Cor. 11: 23-25). Below these miniatures, the following prophets are represented: David twice, Moses and Isaiah on fol. 3vo; David again twice, Moses and Solomon on fol. 4ro. They hold unfurled scrolls with texts which have been related to the Communion. An example is Psalm 33 (34): 9: "Taste and see that the God is good", which the Apostolic Constitutions, VIII.13.16, mention that it must be sung while the believers receive the communion.<sup>10</sup> This Psalm is also mentioned by bishop Cyril of Jerusalem (348-386?) in his description of the Eucharistic rite.<sup>11</sup> The above-mentioned conclusion, that the miniatures of the Communion of the Apostles are inspired from the liturgy, is corroborated in the Rossanensis by the representation of the Prophets holding scrolls with texts which are related to the Eucharist. That the two miniatures of the Communion of the Apostles were copied from elsewhere, and thus not created by the artist for the Rossanensis, can be concluded from the illogical disposition of the figures (Figs. 4-5): Christ is twice depicted in the outer side of the folios, as already noted, instead of in the inner, and the Apostles stride from the middle to the edges of the pages. It would be more logical if the two figures of Christ were placed on the inner side of the page, thus centrally, by which the two rows of the Apostles would stride towards the middle, as other representations of the subject

<sup>10</sup> *Les Constitutions Apostoliques*, Tome III, Livres VII et VIII, Introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes par Marcel Metzger, SC 336 (Paris, 1987), p. 210.

<sup>11</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogia*, V. 20: Migne, PG 33, c. 1124B; Cyrille de Jérusalem, *Cathéchèses mystagogiques*, Introduction, texte critique et notes de Auguste Piédagnel, traduction de P.P.S. Pierre Paris, SC 126 (Paris, 1966), p. 171.

show (e.g. in Fig. 6). The central disposition of the two miniatures in the Rossanensis can be achieved if we were to exchange their place in the codex.

As regards the pictorial source from which these scenes were copied, it has been already observed that the figures are painted in a monumental way with much space between them. This is certainly not the manner of painting miniatures in a manuscript, where the space available is restricted. The wide, spacious manner of rendering the figures seen here recalls monumental painting rather than book illustration. The archetype has been accordingly sought in church decoration: The Evangelists Mark, 14: 15, and Luke, 22: 12, mention that the Last Supper took place in "a large upper room" in Jerusalem, in the place where the Church of Sion was built. The earliest survived source for the decoration of this church is a seventh-century Armenian description of the Holy Places, in which we read:

To the right of the Church (Sion), the chamber of the mysteries, and a wooden cupola in which is imaged the sacred supper of the Saviour. In it an altar at which the liturgy is celebrated.<sup>12</sup>

A round cupola, or perhaps a semi-dome, mentioned in the Armenian description, fits the Communion of the Apostles—as seen in the Rossanensis—much better than the Last Supper or the Washing of the Feet. The final conclusion is, thus, that the ultimate model of the artist of the Rossanensis was the Communion of the Apostles in the Coenaculum of the Church of Sion, the Patriarchal Church in Jerusalem. The wide, spacious manner of painting the Communion of the Apostles has indeed survived in later church decoration. We also see there the altar, which is missing in the Rossanensis. The scene is usually depicted in the half-cylinder of the apse. In the church of Santa Sophia in Ochrid, from ca. 1040 A.D., only one figure of Christ in the middle of the scene receives the two rows of Apostles<sup>13</sup> (Fig. 6). In a contemporary mosaic in the church of Santa Sophia in Kiev (1043-1046 A.D.), however, Christ is depicted twice, on the left while administering the bread and on the right the wine.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> R.N. Bain, "Armenian Description of the Holy Places in the Seventh Century", *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly* (1896), p. 347 (cited by Loerke, *Monumental Miniature*, p. 94).

<sup>13</sup> R. Hamann-Mac Lean, H. Hallensleben, *Die Monumentalmalerei in Serbien und Makedonien. Bildband* (Giessen, 1963), Figs. 4 and 6.

<sup>14</sup> H. Logvin, *Kiev's Hagia Sophia* (Kiev, 1971), pls. 51-68. Loerke, *Monumental Miniature*, fig. 23.

The following scene makes it even more clear that the artist of the Rossanensis copied from monumental painting. It shows the Trial of Christ before Pilate and is illustrated in two miniatures which occupy two full pages, fols. 8ro and 8vo<sup>15</sup> (Figs. 7-8). They represent a Roman court of justice, in which Pilate is seated on a high throne, behind a table. His throne is flanked by two imperial portraits, painted on wooden panels which are held by two soldiers. The imperial portraits are represented once more on the table cloths, assuring that justice is pronounced in the name of the emperor. A secretary on the right is standing, writing the acts of the trial. Christ is led in the miniature on fol 8ro by Annas and Caiaphas before Pilate. Annas addresses Pilate, the latter depicted in a pensive pose by bringing a book scroll to his chin. The text accompanying this scene derives from Matthew, 27: 2: "And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor". The continuation of this verse is illustrated in the miniature in the lower half of this page. Judas casts down the pieces of silver in the temple. The pose and gesture of the high priests clearly render the answer given to Judas on his repentance: "What is that to us? see thou to that" (Matthew, 27: 4). On the right we see Judas hanged from a tree. Below the scene, a shortened version of the relevant passage in Matthew is written. In the miniature on fol. 8vo, Pilate indicates in the direction of Christ who is depicted in the lower zone of the scene. The illustration represents a specific moment, namely the instant Pilate asked the Jews: "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" (Matthew, 27: 17). The answer of the crowd is expressively rendered by means of the vivid gestures of the figures of the Jews flanking Pilate. On the right of lower zone, Barabbas is accordingly released. The iconography used here for Christ before Pilate deviates from the usual one, which shows Pilate washing his hands. The fact that these two scenes in the Rossanensis are placed below an arch line, together with the fact that the depiction of the crowd follows this line in a rather artificial manner, leads to the following conclusion: the ultimate model of the artist who painted these impressive miniatures must have been scenes in monumental painting, e.g., an apse with its half-dome or an arched niche. This was possibly the apse of the Praetorium in Jerusalem,

<sup>15</sup> Weitzmann, *Late Antique*, 92-93, pls. 30-31. W.C. Loerke, "The Miniatures of the Trial in the Rossano Gospels", *The Art Bulletin*, 43 (1961), pp. 171-195, esp. 186 ff. Idem, *Monumental Miniature*, p. 68 ff.

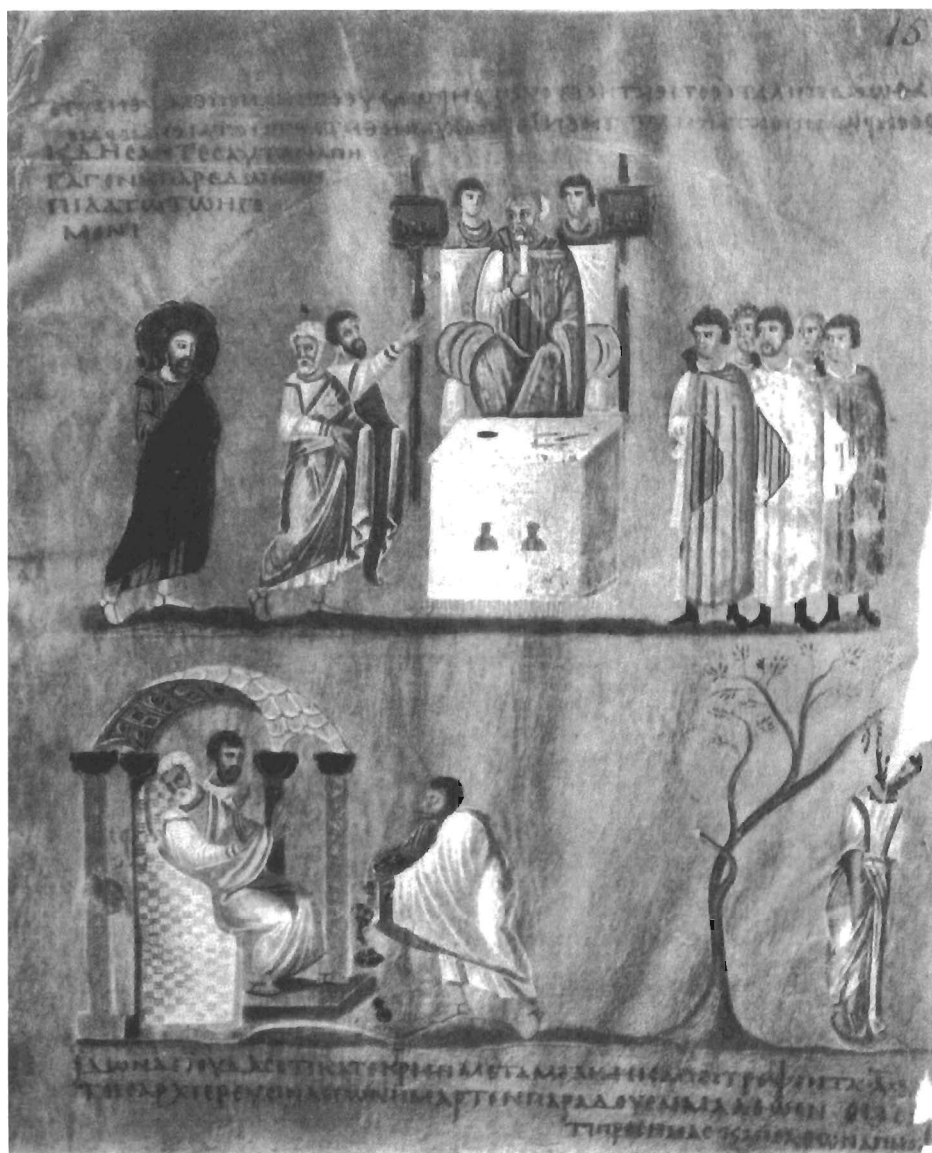


Fig. 7. Trial of Christ before Pilate, Rossano Codex, fol. 8r, 6th century.

where Christ stood before Pilate, according to tradition. The Praetorium is mentioned in the oldest description of holy places in Jerusalem, written in 333 A.D. by the Pilgrim of Bordeaux. The composition of the miniatures makes this theory acceptable. On the grounds of this theory one may partially reconstruct the lost wall-paintings of the Praetorium. The two groups showing Christ and Barabbas must have been painted in the half-cylinder of the apse, below the half-



Fig. 8. Trial of Christ before Pilate, Rossano Codex, fol. 8v, 6th century.

dome, separated by windows, according to a reconstruction by Loerke.<sup>16</sup>

The study of the miniatures showing the Communion of the Apostles, and especially those representing Christ before Pilate, leads to the conclusion that these scenes were not invented as illustrations for

<sup>16</sup> Loerke, *Monumental Miniature*, p. 68, Fig. 6. Sevrugian, *Rossano Codex*, pp. 67-74, *passim*.

a codex, but copied from monumental painting. Thanks to their survival in the Rossanensis, we gain useful, visual information about the lost decoration of the Praetorium and the Coenaculum in the Church of Sion in Jerusalem. The physical characteristics of the other scenes in the Rossanensis, i.e., the horizontal placing at the upper part of the page, suggests that the archetype of these scenes was most probably a lost, prolifically illuminated, Gospel book.<sup>17</sup> The arrangement of all the miniatures at the beginning of the codex, according to the order of sequence in which the lections in the Passion week were read, suggests that the miniatures were copied from a Lectionary.<sup>18</sup> The Rossanensis attests, thus, the existence of earlier, lost illuminated Lectionaries, copies of which have only survived from ca. 900 A.D. onwards.<sup>19</sup>

### *The Rabbula Codex*

That the Church of Sion was decorated with wall-paintings is also verified by another miniature, that showing the Pentecost in the Syrian Rabbula Gospels, Laur. Plut. I.56, fol. 14vo, which were written in 586 A.D. by the monk Rabbula in the Syrian monastery of St. John in Zagba, Mesopotamia<sup>20</sup> (Fig. 9). The scene is placed in the miniature in an arched niche, the spandrels of which are decorated with trees. The ultimate model of it must have been the Chapel of

<sup>17</sup> For a different opinion, see Loerke, *Monumental Miniature*, pp. 73-78, *passim*, who examined the Washing of the Feet and applied to all miniatures of the Rossanensis the conclusion which he reached from the study of the miniatures showing the Communion of the Apostles and Christ before Pilate.

<sup>18</sup> Lectionaries have been preserved from the fifth century onwards; see Aland, K., *Kurzgefasste Liste der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments*, I (Berlin, New York, 1994). My thanks are due to Prof. H.J. de Jonge, Leiden, for this information.

<sup>19</sup> E.g., Petrop. gr. 21. On these Lectionaries, see mainly: K. Weitzmann, "The Narrative and Liturgical Gospel Illustrations", in *New Testament Manuscript Studies*, eds. M.M. Parvis and A.P. Wikgren (Chicago, 1950), pp. 151-174 and 215-219; reprinted in: Idem, *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (Chicago, London, 1971), pp. 247-270. K. Weitzmann, *Byzantine Liturgical Psalters and Gospels* (London, 1980), essays VIII-XIV.

<sup>20</sup> J. Leroy, *Les manuscrits syriaques à peintures* (Paris, 1964), p. 139 ff. C. Cecchelli, G. Furlani, M. Salmi, *The Rabbula Gospels, Facsimile edition of the miniatures of the Syriac manuscript Plut. I, 56 in the Medicean-Laurentian library* (Olten, Lausanne, 1959). K. Weitzmann, "Loca Sancta and the Representational Art of Palestine", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 28 (1974), pp. 31-55; reprinted in: Idem, *Studies in the Arts at Sinai* (Princeton, 1982), pp. 19-62, with annotations on pp. 423-424. Weitzmann, *Late Antique*, pp. 97-105, pls. 34-38, in colour, esp. p. 105, pl. 38.



Fig. 9. Pentecost, Rabbula Gospels, Laur. Plut. I. 56, fol. 14vo, 586 A.D.

the Holy Ghost in the Church of Sion, which was identified with the place where the descent of the Holy Ghost took place. During the Crusader period, John of Würzburg (12th cent.) mentioned a Pentecostal scene in mosaic in an apse of the church of Sion, next to a Last Supper in the upper church and a Washing of the Feet in the crypt of this church.<sup>21</sup> The iconography of the Pentecost in the Rabbula

<sup>21</sup> T. Tobler, *Descriptiones Terrae Sanctae* (Leipzig, 1874), pp. 136, 147 and 157 (cited by Loerke, *Monumental Miniature*, p. 94).

Gospels is exceptional in that the Apostles are depicted standing instead of seated, usually on a bank having the shape of a half-circle, and in the appearance of the Virgin, which is usually missing from the scene.<sup>22</sup>

We have already seen a few scenes which occupy an entire page in a manuscript. They reveal the end of the evolution of the book illustration from the *papyrus style* (Figs. 2-3). The Rabbula codex shows one more different kind of disposition of miniatures on a page, namely the marginal miniature.<sup>23</sup> They flank the Canon Tables by Eusebius, which are spread here over nineteen miniatures. On fol. 4vo the fourth Canon is written<sup>24</sup> (Fig. 10). The margins are decorated with the Prophets David and Solomon above, the Baptism and the Nativity in the middle and the Massacre of the Innocents below. Both the Nativity and the Baptism of Christ contain unique iconographic elements. The Nativity portrays a seated Virgin, while pointing at the Child. The Child is placed on a brick construction and not in a crib. Behind it, an angel is represented, if we correctly identify the dark blue form behind him as a wing.<sup>25</sup> He is flanked by blue and red lighted candles. The scene has been placed under an arch, which confines the cave in which Christ was born. The small number of figures of which the Nativity scene consists here is not unusual for the period before the Iconoclasm (726-847 A.D.). The replacement of the crib by a brick construction and the disposition of the candles justify the conclusion that the scene depicts a *locus sanctus*, in this case

<sup>22</sup> On the iconography of the Pentecost see: A. Grabar, "Le schéma iconographique de la Pentecôte", *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, 2 (1928), 223-229; reprinted in Idem, *L'art de la fin de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Âge*, I-III, (Paris, 1968), I, pp. 615-627; III, pls. 154-158. S. Seeliger, *Pfingsten. Die Ausgiessung des Heiligen Geistes am fünfzigsten Tage nach Ostern* (Düsseldorf, 1958). Idem, in *LCI*, 3, cc. 415-423. A.C. Esmeyer, "Cosmos en Theatrum Mundi in de Pinkstervoorstelling", *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, 15 (1964), pp. 19-44. G. Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*, 5 vols. (Güntersloh, 1966-1991), IV.1, pp. 11-38 (hereafter: Schiller, *Ikonographie*).

<sup>23</sup> On the evolution of the marginal miniature, see Weitzmann, *Roll and Codex*, p. 112 ff. Cf. I. Spatharakis, "The Structure of Book Illumination", in *Bysans och Norden. Akta för Nordiska forskarkursen i bysantinsk konstvetenskap 1986*, ed. E. Piltz (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis Figura, Nova Series, 23), (Uppsala, 1989), pp. 51-56, esp. 52-53.

<sup>24</sup> Weitzmann, *Late Antique*, p. 97, pl. 34, in colour.

<sup>25</sup> This beardless figure is often identified as Joseph, e.g., by Weitzmann, *Late Antique*, p. 97, but Joseph is often omitted from early representations of the Nativity. On the iconography of the Nativity see mainly Millet, *Recherches*, 93-166. Schiller, *Ikonographie*, I, pp. 69-99. G. Ristow, *Die Geburt Christi in der frühchristlichen und byzantinisch-ostkirchlichen Kunst* (Recklinghausen, 1963). Idem, in *RbK*, II, cc. 637-662, s.v. *Geburt Christi*. P. Wilhelm, in *LCI*, 2, cc. 86-103, s.v. *Geburt Christi*.





Fig. 10. Canon Table, Rabbula Gospels, Laur. Plut. I. 56, fol. 4v, 586 A.D.

the grotto in the Nativity church in Bethlehem, with an altar (and candles) in it, the spot at which, according to tradition, Christ was born. The Baptism on the left shows a large figure of St. John the Baptist contrasting the tiny one of Christ, whom he baptizes by placing his hand on his head.<sup>26</sup> The hand of God appearing from a

<sup>26</sup> On the iconography of the Baptism of Christ see: Millet, *Recherches*, pp. 170-215. G. Ristow, *Die Taufe Christi* (Recklinghausen, 1965). Schiller, *Ikonographie*, op. cit., I, pp. 137-152. *LCI*, 4, cc. 247-255, s.v. *Taufe Jesu*.

segment in the upper part of the miniature symbolizes one of the few Theophanies described in the Gospel books, by which the voice of God was heard. Below the hand of God, the Holy Ghost is depicted in the shape of a dove, in accordance with the Gospels:

Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased (Luke, 3: 21-22; cf. also Matthew, 3: 16-17).

This Baptism scene includes a unique iconographic element: the flame painted in yellow to the right of the figure of Christ. It literally illustrates the Gospel passages by Luke, 3:16 and Matthew, 3: 11: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire".<sup>27</sup> The Massacre of the Innocents shows Herod on the left and the soldiers executing his orders on the right.

### *Conclusions*

The following conclusions may be drawn from this study of several but not all aspects of Early Christian illuminated Gospel books from the East: All of them are luxurious copies, ordered by wealthy sponsors in scriptoria, the location of which cannot be determined with certainty; an exception are the Rabbula Gospels, of which we know that they were executed in 586 A.D. in the scriptorium of the Syriac monastery of St. John at Zagba, Mesopotamia. The richness of these codices consists of the purple parchment folios, the silver or golden ink and occasionally the full-page miniatures, as seen in the Rossano and Rabbula Gospels (Figs. 7-9). The latter reveal the climax of the evolution of the book illustration which started, we presume, with tiny miniatures, placed horizontally between the text columns in the so-called *papyrus style* (Figs. 2-3). The existence of illuminated Gospel books in this style, which enables an artist to supply his text with a great number of miniatures, has been proved with the aid of the study of the Sinopensis: Among the miniatures which have survived

<sup>27</sup> Luke, 3:16: *John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latches of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.* Matthew, 3:11: *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.*

in this fragmentary Gospel of Matthew, the Barren Fig Tree is included; this suggests that the artist copied from an extensively illustrated Gospel book, in which not only the most important events from the life of Christ were decorated, but also the less significant ones. This miniature helps us, in other words, to reconstruct lost illuminated Tetraevangelia with a much greater number of miniatures than that we find in the manuscripts which have survived from the Early Christian era. The miniatures at the upper part of a page in the Rossanensis, which do not illustrate the relevant passages of the Gospels within this codex but are painted at the beginning of the book, presuppose the existence of early, now lost Lectionaries; they show feasts from the Passion week and are painted in the order of the sequence the lections are read then, just as these lections appear in a Lectionary.

We have been able to reconstruct even more on the basis of these few illuminated manuscripts: The disposition of the figures below an arch line in the two miniatures showing Christ before Pilate in the Rossanensis suggests that they were copied from a half-dome or a niche, by which we get an idea of the lost monumental paintings in the Praetorium in Jerusalem (Figs. 7-8). The miniatures showing the Communion of the Apostles in the same manuscript and that showing the Pentecost in the Rabbula Gospels reconstruct respectively the decoration of the Coenaculum and the Chapel of the Holy Ghost in the Church of Sion in Jerusalem, supplying thus additional, visual information next to that written (Figs. 4-5 and 9). Another *locus sanctus*, the grotto of the Nativity Church in Bethlehem, has probably inspired the artist of the Nativity scene, painted on the margin of the fourth Canon table in the Rabbula Gospels (Fig. 10). These examples show one of the working methods of the artist, to wit copying from already existing models. The miniature showing the Feast of Herod in the Sinopensis, reveals another working method of the artist, namely inventing for a specific text (Fig. 1). This conclusion is reached by studying the relation between text and miniature and after establishing that the details in the text are reproduced in the miniature. On the contrary, the representation of the Communion of the Apostles shows that the artist was not literally inspired by the text of the Gospels, but by the liturgy, from the moment the priest gives the communion to the faithful. The liturgy has also inspired the portraits of the prophets which have been added to various scenes in the Sinopensis and Rossanensis. They hold unfurled scrolls with texts

which are read on the feasts represented by the scenes they accompany.

Concerning the iconography of the subjects, unique in composition or detail are, e.g., Christ before Pilate in the Rossanensis, as well as the Baptism with a flame above the waters of the Jordan and the Nativity of Christ in the Rabbula Gospels (Fig. 10). On the contrary, other themes show that their iconography was established in this early period and remained practically unchanged in later times; an example of this kind is the Communion of the Apostles in the Rossanensis (Figs. 4-6). As regards the use of these sumptuous codices, the Sinopensis is an example which shows that it was used as a Lectionary for the liturgy, because the names of feasts have been added in the upper part of the pages, indicating when the Gospel passages written under these names were to be read. The addition of the portraits of Prophets holding unfurled scrolls with texts on them, which were also read in the liturgy, strengthens the above conclusion.

## BIBLICAL CYCLES ON CHURCH WALLS: *PRO LECTIONE PICTURA*

P.C.J. van Dael

Saint Augustine writes in his *De consensu evangelistarum* that they who have sought Christ and his apostles not in sacred books but in pictures on walls, thoroughly deserve to err.<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere he states: "When you see a picture there is nothing else to do but to see and to praise".<sup>2</sup> Gregory of Tours gives an example of people who did no more than just see. In his *Historia Francorum* (591), he tells that a certain Eberulf, accused of murder, had sought refuge in the sacristy of Saint Martins's church in Tours; his servants forced their way into the church through the sacristy and gaped at the frescoes on the walls.<sup>3</sup> Nine years after the completion of the book of Gregory, his namesake pope Gregory I wrote that pictures in churches did have a useful function: *pro lectione pictura est*, pictures are the books of the illiterate.<sup>4</sup> In accordance with this statement one can speak of the 'pedagogical-didactical' function of pictures. In this paper I will work out—on the basis of classical and Early Christian texts—how images can or cannot instruct the viewer.

### *Pictures as books*

Gregory of Nyssa (c.334-394) refers to a certain series of pictures illustrating the martyrdom of Saint Theodore. He mentions a double function of these pictures:

All of these he [the painter] wrought by means of colors as if it were a book that uttered speech, and so he both represented the martyr's feats with all clarity and adorned the church like a beautiful meadow; for

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<sup>1</sup> *De consensu evangelistarum* I, 10: C.M. Chazelle, "Pictures, books, and the illiterate: Pope Gregory I's letters to Serenus of Marseilles", *Word & Image* 6 (1990), p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> *In Iohannem, tractatus* XXIV, 2. Translation: Chazelle, op. cit., p. 146.

<sup>3</sup> *Historia Francorum*, VII, 21: H. Schrade, *Vor- und frühromanische Malerei* (Cologne, 1958), p. 105.

<sup>4</sup> Second letter to Serenus. Greg. Magnus, *Registrum epistolarum* XI, 10, CCSL 140 A, p. 874. Translation: Chazelle, op. cit., p. 140.

painting, even if it is silent, is capable of speaking from the wall and being of the greatest benefit.<sup>5</sup>

What Gregory says here is also applicable to biblical cycles on church walls.

First, he points at the decorative function of the pictures: the church was adorned like a beautiful meadow. Several Early Christian, Byzantine and medieval texts indicate what was experienced as striking: light and color, variety, lively figures. These recurring characterizations no doubt tell us what a decoration was supposed to look like, but may also say something about what the decorations actually looked like, or how they were perceived.<sup>6</sup>

The second notable thing is that Gregory compares the pictures with words or books: painting is like a book that utters speech. This aspect I will work out: images as books. In the first place, it is worth noting that Gregory of Nyssa is not the only writer who lets the silent painting speak from the wall. For Basil (c.330-379), "what the sermon shows of the story through hearing, the silent picture puts before the eyes by imitation".<sup>7</sup> The concept of painting as silent poetry, and, inversely, of poetry as a speaking painting, has already been formulated by the Greek poet Simonides (c. 556-468).<sup>8</sup> Also Horace's *ut pictura poesis* represents the same concept.<sup>9</sup>

Although word and image were paralleled, they were not considered to be equivalents. On the one hand, literature stands above visual art, because the written word does not stop at the outward appearance, as the arts of painting and of sculpture do. But on the other hand, seeing transcends hearing, because the eye is more reliable than the ear,<sup>10</sup> and the observation through the eye is more

<sup>5</sup> *Laudatio S. Theodori*, Migne PG 46, c. 737 D. Translation: C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1972), p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> On light and color in church decorations, and the anagogic function of it, see: P. van Dael, "Aniconic Decoration in Early Christian and Medieval Churches", *The Heythrop Journal. A Quarterly Review of Philosophy and Theology* 36 (1995), pp. 382-396.

<sup>7</sup> Basilus, *Homilia XIX* ("In sanctos quadraginta martyres"), 2, Migne PG 31, c. 509 A. Translation: L.G. Duggan, "Was art really the 'book of the illiterate'?", *Word & Image* 5 (1989), p. 228. Cf. G. Lange, *Bild und Wort. Die katechetischen Funktionen des Bildes in der griechischen Theologie des sechsten bis neunten Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg, 1969), p. 15.

<sup>8</sup> Lange, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 361. See for a history of this idea C.O. Brink's commentary ad loc.

<sup>10</sup> Herodotus, *Historiae* I, 8.

direct than the perception through the ear.<sup>11</sup> A lively description of an event transforms a reader or hearer, so to say, into a viewer and eyewitness, whose emotions are directly incited.<sup>12</sup> Gregor of Nyssa, in a sermon held in 383, tells the story of the sacrifice of Abraham, and refers to a painting that used to elicit tears in his eyes: "so clearly art evokes the story".<sup>13</sup>

*Pictures as books of the illiterate*

If a painter is able to change the wall into a speaking book, an illiterate can 'read' the wall. That is the conclusion of pope Gregory I:

For a picture is displayed in churches on this account, in order that those who do not know letters may at least read by seeing on the walls what they are unable to read in books...

For what writing offers to those who read it, a picture offers to the ignorant who look at it, since in it the ignorant see what they ought to follow, in it they read who do not know letters; whence especially for gentiles a picture stands in place of reading.<sup>14</sup>

Not only the comparing of the spoken or written word with the book, but also the idea of images as being useful for the illiterate, is a traditional motive. Dio Chrysostomus (c.40-c.120) says:

[poets] appealed to the ear alone, whereas it was simply through the eye that [artists], for their part, interpreted the divine attributes to more numerous and less cultivated spectators.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Lange, op. cit., pp. 19-20, 23-25.

<sup>12</sup> According to Plutarch, Thucydides tries to change his readers into spectators and to arouse emotion and excitement. Plutarchus, *De gloria Atheniensium* 3 (*Moralia* 347 A); Lange, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>13</sup> *De deitate filii et spiritus sancti*, Migne, PG 46, col. 572 C. Lange, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>14</sup> *Idcirco enim pictura in ecclesiis adhibetur, ut hi qui litteras nesciunt saltem in parietibus uidendo legant, quae legere in codicibus non ualent* (first letter to Serenus: *Registrum epistolarum* IX, 209, CCSL 140 A, p. 768); *Nam quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotis praestat pictura cementibus, quia in ipsa ignorantes uident quod sequi debeant, in ipsa legunt qui litteras nesciunt; unde praecipue gentibus pro lectione pictura est* (second letter to Serenus: *Registrum epistolarum* XI, 10, CCSL 140 A, p. 874). Translation: Chazelle, op. cit., p. 139.

<sup>15</sup> *Or.* XII, 46. Translation: James W. Cohoon and Henry L. Crosby, *Dio Chrysostom, Discourses*, vol. II (Cambridge Mass./London, 1950), p. 51. Cf. H.L. Kessler, "Pictorial Narrative and Church Mission in Sixth-Century Gaul", *Studies in the History of Art* 16 (1985), p. 76, note 13; Lange, op. cit., p. 21.

According to Nilus of Ancyra († c.430), Old and New Testament stories on church walls are meant for “the illiterate who are unable to read the Holy Scriptures”.<sup>16</sup> Hypatius, metropolitan bishop of Ephesus († after 537-8), says that he, for his part, does not take pleasure whatever in any sculpture or painting. He prefers reading the Scripture. But the less perfect, simple people had to learn by means of sight.<sup>17</sup> Paulinus of Nola defends his decoration of the *basilica nova* with Old Testament scenes by arguing that most of the visitors of that church are peasant people, not able to read.<sup>18</sup> The classical formulation of pope Gregory I, several times repeated in the middle ages, has already been quoted.

*Pictures as the books of the illiterate: Christian motivation*

The parallel of word and image, and the motive of pictures as appropriate for the illiterate are pre-Christian themes, that were accepted by Christians. There are typical Christian motivations to do so: pictures can be used as a form of preaching. Pope Gregory's statements about the function of images in churches are to be seen in the context of his conciliation in the dispute between the iconoclastic bishop Severus of Marseille and the image loving faithful, who turned away from their bishop. The pope passed a kind of Solomon's judgment, forbidding not the images, but the *adoratio* of them. It is not only a diplomatic sentence meant to avoid a schism, but also a pastoral one: pictures are justified because they have a proclaiming, missionary function with regard to the illiterate, especially the *gentes*.<sup>19</sup>

Sometimes the use of images as a form of preaching is attributed to the apostles themselves. The legendary *Vita Pancratii* from the seventh century puts the reader in the epoch of Saint Peter. He sends out two preachers with the task to build churches. The churches are to be decorated with scenes from the life of Jesus. The two disciples are provided with the equipment needed for the liturgy and preach-

<sup>16</sup> *Epistolarum liber* IV, LXI, Letter to Prefect Olympiodorus, Migne PG 79, c.577 D. Translation: Mango, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>17</sup> *Summikka zetemata*: Mango, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>18</sup> *Carmen* 27, 542-551: R.C. Goldschmidt, *Paulinus' Churches of Nola. Texts, Translations and Commentary* (Amsterdam, 1940), pp. 62-63.

<sup>19</sup> H. Feld, *Der Ikonoklasmus des Westens* (Leyden etc., 1990), p. 13; Kessler, op. cit., p. 75.



ing: a Gospel book, a chalice, a cross and a volume with miniatures serving as models for the church decoration.<sup>20</sup> According to Nicephorus (758-828), patriarch of Constantinople, the use of miniatures and painted panels goes back to the period of the first evangelization.<sup>21</sup> The letter addressed to the iconoclastic emperor Theophilus by a council held at Jerusalem in 836 goes even further by saying that the apostles adorned their churches with paintings and mosaics of scenes from the life of Christ before the Gospel had been written.<sup>22</sup>

A second, typical Christian motive for using paintings as books of the illiterate is the concern for the spiritually poor. Whereas ancient philosophers considered the images as useful for the uncultivated crowd, while looking down on that same crowd—an attitude that also Hypatius of Ephesus seems to show—the Gospel is praising the poor and uneducated. So Saint Augustine noted that Christ had not chosen kings, senators, philosophers or rhetors, but plebeians, fishermen, the poor and ignorant. Augustine did not accept the images as ‘books of the poor’. Pope Gregory, on the other hand, who did not want to put the words of heavenly prophecies in the straitjacket of the grammarian Donatus, and for whom the *benedictio* was more important than the *bona dictio*, and who himself wanted to speak the language of the simple, thought very highly of images, as a language that could be understood by the illiterate.<sup>23</sup>

The illiterate, for whom the paintings are destined, were newly converted people, belonging to the lower classes. Paulinus refers to peasants, who were unable to read. These people were converted to Christianity not long ago.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, the difference between the literate and the illiterate was not that big, because, actually, the *literati* were instructed in matters of belief in the same manner as the *illiterati*, namely by means of catechesis, preaching and liturgy, and, in practice, also the literate had to rely on the word: hardly anyone

<sup>20</sup> Mango, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

<sup>21</sup> *Antirrhethici*: Mango, op. cit., pp. 175-176.

<sup>22</sup> Mango, op. cit., pp. 176-177.

<sup>23</sup> H. Schrade, *Vor- und frühromanische Malerei* (Cologne, 1958), pp. 108-109.

<sup>24</sup> *Carmen* 27, 547-550: Goldschmidt, op. cit., pp. 62-63. Pope Gregory speaks of the *idiotae* and *gentes*, identified by J.W. Thompson as ‘the lower classes and especially the foreign (i.e., the German) element in the population’: Duggan, op. cit., p. 228, note 1.

had access to a bible to read. Reading the bible was, in fact, a privilege reserved to very few people, mainly the clergy.<sup>25</sup>

*Can images replace books?*

To what extent can images replace books? To what extent can one speak of the didactic function of images? To what extent can images teach something that is not already known? Pope Gregory refers in his second letter to Serenus to *nescientes litteras*, who, looking at pictures, might learn what has been said.<sup>26</sup> The words “learn what has been said” presuppose a preceding or simultaneous instruction. One sees what is known already. The illiterate are able to read the images because they hear or have heard about that what has been represented.<sup>27</sup> We can think here of what Paulinus of Nola wrote. He had decorated his church in consideration of the illiterate rustics, but, at the same time, he had put explanatory inscriptions over the paintings. This shows that the decoration was destined not only for the illiterate, but also for the literate, who, on the basis of the *tituli*, could instruct others.<sup>28</sup> Gregory of Tours tells us, that, at the feast of Saint Martin, his *vita* was read in the cathedral of Tours: what one learned through the reading could be recognised in the paintings, illustrating the life of Saint Martin, in that church.<sup>29</sup>

It is only possible to speak of the didactic function of images when we presuppose that learning does not mean only learning something new, but also: making oneself familiar with something already known, by fixing it deeper in one's mind. Reading a text as well as

<sup>25</sup> Chazelle, op. cit., p. 142; Duggan, op. cit., p. 245.

<sup>26</sup> *Ut nescientes litteras ipsam historiam intendentes, quid dictum sit discerent* (second letter to Serenus, *Registrum epistolarum* XI, 10, CCSL 140 A, p. 875). Translation: Chazelle, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>27</sup> Chazelle, op. cit., pp. 138, 141, 147; Duggan, op. cit., pp. 227, 248; A. van Run, “Functies en waardering van het beeld”, *De middeleeuwse ideeënwereld*, ed. M. Stoffers (Heerlen/Hilversum, 1994), pp. 348-349.

<sup>28</sup> ... *fucata coloribus umbra, / quae super exprimitur titulis, ut littera monstret / quod manus explicuit, dumque omnes picta uicissim / ostendunt releguntque sibi...* “(for the sketches are painted in various colours. Over them are explanatory inscriptions, the written word revealing the theme outlined by the painter's hand. So when all the countryfolk point out and read over to each other the subjects painted, (they turn more slowly to thoughts of food)” (translation P.G. Walsh) (*Carmen* 27, 583-586): Goldschmidt, op. cit., p. 64. Cf. Duggan, op. cit., p. 229.

<sup>29</sup> Kessler, op. cit., pp. 85-86.

seeing a picture was seen as useful. Reading had in earlier days something to do with speaking and hearing: one was reading aloud.<sup>30</sup> Reading aloud was a means to help memorize what one was reading. In the Bible, reading a book is compared with eating it: "eat this scroll..." (Ezekiel 3:1), "Take it [the little scroll] and eat it" (Revelation 10:9). Reading something is consuming it. Reading (aloud) a text and learning it by heart were the first steps.<sup>31</sup>

An image can be a great help to fix something in one's mind. Cicero says in his *De oratore*:

It has been sagaciously discerned by Simonides..., that the most complete pictures are formed in our minds of the things that have been conveyed to them and imprinted on them by the senses, but that the keenest of all our senses is the sense of sight, and that consequently perceptions received by the ears or by reflexion can be most easily retained if they are also conveyed to our minds by the mediation of the eyes.<sup>32</sup>

When in Early Christian and medieval times something is written about church decoration, it is written by theologians. And theologians—concerned as they are with books—are inclined to legitimize images as texts. But I believe that there is something more to it than a onesided interest that belongs to a certain profession. I think that those writers have their own particular reasons. Images have—at least in earlier periods—a twofold function. Images, especially independent, isolated *imagines*, do have a certain power. I am referring to two recent publications on this topic: *The Power of Images* (1989) of David Freedberg and *Bild und Kult* (1990) of Hans Belting. Images, especially *historiae*, have both an illustrative and memorial function. An *imago* is something different. The pagan *imagines* were independent statues, that had a certain power. They were idols in which invisible powers were at work. By equating the images in the church with texts, the church fathers distinguished these images from the independent idols. Pictures in a church belong to a religion where a

<sup>30</sup> In antiquity a book speaks, the page has a voice: Lange, op. cit., p. 33, note 108. Lange refers in the same note to Philip, who heard the Ethiopian eunuch reading the book of Isaiah the prophet (Acts 8:30), and to Augustine, who in the *Confessiones* (VI, 3) notes that Ambrose was reading silently.

<sup>31</sup> Duggan, op. cit., pp. 245-246.

<sup>32</sup> Cicero, *De oratore* II, 357. Translation: F.A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago/Londen, 1974), p. 4.

book is central. A man like pope Gregory negates the power of the images by presenting them as substitutes for written words.<sup>33</sup>

It may be that Gregory, defending the images in the church, but forbidding at the same time the *adoratio* of them, recognized the importance that images could have for a newly converted population, who had not yet completely exchanged their idols for what belongs to the religion of the Holy Writ. According to pope Gregory, missionaries did not have to completely extinguish heathen temples and some old practices, for it was impossible to cut away everything from their hearts. It was necessary, on the other hand, to transfer those things in a Christian sense.<sup>34</sup> Also the images formed a part of those practices. Perhaps bishop Serenus had scandalized the *gentes* by removing the images. They interpreted the removal of the images as demonstrating the powerlessness of the persons who had been represented. In this context one can note that it is understandable that early missionaries removed the idols in order to show their impotence.<sup>35</sup>

In his *Regula pastoralis* Gregory recommends to the pastors the daily reading of the Holy Scripture.<sup>36</sup> What the Scripture is for the clergy are the pictures of biblical stories for the illiterate. In his second letter to Serenus Gregory says:

For what writing (*scriptura*) offers to those who read it, a picture offers to the ignorant who look at it... hence especially for gentiles a picture stands in place of reading (*pro lectione pictura*).<sup>37</sup>

The words *lectio* and *scriptura* remind one of the reading of the Holy Scripture. The *lectio* of the *Sacra Scriptura* is done by the illiterate visitor of the church by means of the images on the church walls. These pictures recall the events represented, already known from hearing: a permanent reminder of the momentary reading and sermon.<sup>38</sup>

We have seen that Paulinus of Nola decorated his church with pictures in consideration of the illiterate rustics, but that he also made *tituli*. Such subscriptions are added, either because the images

<sup>33</sup> Chazelle, op. cit., p. 148.

<sup>34</sup> *Registrum epistularum* XI, 56: Kessler, op. cit., p. 75.

<sup>35</sup> Kessler, op. cit., pp. 75, 85.

<sup>36</sup> *Regula pastoralis* II, 11: Chazelle, op. cit., p. 149.

<sup>37</sup> *Nam quod legentibus scriptura, hoc idiotis praestat pictura cementibus...; unde praecipue gentibus pro lectione pictura est* (second letter to Serenus, cf. n. 14): Chazelle, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>38</sup> Chazelle, op. cit., pp. 148-150.

themselves are not clear enough,<sup>39</sup> or to denote the 'spiritual' significance of the *historia*,<sup>40</sup> which could not be done by means of the visual image. I will give some examples. One of the *tituli* of Ambrose says: "Abraham received Christ with great hospitality".<sup>41</sup> In Prudentius' *Tituli Historiarum* Elim, "where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees" (Exodus 15:27), symbolizes the apostles and the disciples of Luke 10:1; the two times six stones were set up in the middle of the Jordan (Joshua 4:9) "as symbol of the disciples".<sup>42</sup> The subscriptions may contain also a tropological meaning: Prudentius for instance compares the torches fastened to the tails of the foxes (Judges 15:4ss) with the flames of the vices, spread by heresy in the fields.<sup>43</sup> It was possible to understand the images on different levels. The illiterate could 'read' the images in a fundamental, literal way. The literate could, through the *tituli*, ascend to a higher, spiritual level.<sup>44</sup>

### *The story told by the images*

Even though we conclude that, in general, images do not give new information, but refer to what is already known, we can ask if the image can add something to the knowledge the viewer already has. Do the images tell their own story? An example shows how the image can add something to the text. When in the Rossano Codex (6th century) the Samaritan (Luke 10) has around his head an aureole with a cross, he is identified with Christ (this is a miniature painting, but this example can also serve as an example of what is possible in the monumental decoration). Here the painting adds something to the text. It is possible, however, that the identification of the Samaritan with Christ was already, through preaching, generally accepted.

Also the disposition of the images can add something to the text.<sup>45</sup> Generally a historical cycle starts on the left wall, to be continued on

<sup>39</sup> Schrade, op. cit., p. 107.

<sup>40</sup> P. van Dael, "Pro lectione lectura. Systeem en decoratie van de vroegchristelijke kerkwand", *Internationaal katholiek Tijdschrift Communio* 7 (1982), pp. 426-430.

<sup>41</sup> S. Merkle, "Die Ambrosianischen Tituli", *Römische Quartalschrift* 10 (1896), p. 218.

<sup>42</sup> *Tituli Historiarum*, 53-56, 57-60: R. Pillinger, *Die Tituli Historiarum oder das sogenannte Dittochaeon des Prudentius* (Vienna, 1980), pp. 45, 48.

<sup>43</sup> *Tituli Historiarum*, 69-72: Pillinger, op. cit., p. 54.

<sup>44</sup> Kessler, op. cit., pp. 84, 88.

<sup>45</sup> See Van Dael, op. cit. (1982), pp. 425-428, and the literature quoted.

the right wall. So we see in the Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, on the left wall, scenes from Genesis, and on the right wall scenes from Exode and Joshua;<sup>46</sup> in the Sant'Apollinare Nuovo on the left wall the life of Christ is illustrated, on the right wall the history of his Passion.<sup>47</sup> When in a church the two Testaments are illustrated, the New Testament is located on the more important place. So we see in the Santa Maria Maggiore the infance of Christ on the triumphal arch. Also in the Saint Paul the New Testament occupies the main place: the Old Testament is on the right side, the New Testament on the left<sup>48</sup> (the more important side, because seen from the apse this side is the right one). Thus one has expressed that the New Testament fulfils—and surpasses—the Old Testament.

A typological relation is indicated where scenes from the Old and New Testament are opposed to each other. The *tituli* of Prudentius († after 405) and Rusticus Helpidius (6th century) refer to an existent or imaginary decoration, in which the Old and New Testament are opposed. Eve and Mary open the Old and New Testament series. In the *tituli* of Prudentius, the Crossing of the Red Sea and the Healing of the born blind—the ninth scene on both walls—are opposed: the two scenes refer to baptism.

In the Santa Maria Maggiore (432-440) and Sant'Apollinare Nuovo (c. 500) the historical sequence of the scenes has been changed<sup>49</sup> in order to put in the first church the sacrifice of Melchizedech and in Ravenna the miracle of Cana and the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes in the beginning of the wall, as close as possible to the altar, to which these scenes are typologically referring.

Also the style of a decoration may have a message of its own. I refer here to Ernst Kitzinger, who distinguishes in the mosaics of Santa Maria Maggiore two styles or 'modes': an 'epic' mode in the

<sup>46</sup> The mosaics in Santa Maria Maggiore date from 432-440.

<sup>47</sup> These mosaics date from c. 500.

<sup>48</sup> The decorations are put there during the reign of Leo I, 440-461.

<sup>49</sup> In the Santa Maria Maggiore, the series opens, left of the triumphal arch, with Melchizedek who brought out bread and wine to Abraham (Gen. 14), then follows the scene of The Three Visitors (Gen. 18), and The Parting of Lot and Abraham (Gen. 13). In the Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, the first three mosaics, to begin with the left wall, near the triumphal arch, illustrate the miracle of Cana (the mosaic that we see now is the effect of a wrong 19th century restauration), the miracle of the loaves and fishes, and the vocation of Peter and Andrew.

nave, and a 'hieratic' mode on the triumphal arch.<sup>50</sup> The epic mode means a narrative style, adapted for multified scenes. Kitzinger finds this style also in illustrated Homer and Aeneis manuscripts, where the origins of Rome are sung. The first Bible books contain the history of the origin of the new, Christian Rome. The more static, hieratic mode belongs to the imperial art. This style, used in a Christian basilica, stamps the papal Rome as the successor of the old, imperial Rome.

Finally, the artist makes the scenes, as it were, approach the beholder, 'translating' them for the viewer, dressing the biblical figures in contemporaneous clothes, having them make 'Roman' gestures, placing them in a recognizable environment, animating them with emotions that can be shared.

Images as books of the illiterate: this does not mean books giving instructions and new knowledge. It is better to say that reminding and recognition are involved: the stories have to be heard over and over again, texts have to be read again and again. Thus one can appropriate the contents of the Holy Scripture, and conditions are created that make it possible to turn that what is heard and seen into acts of imitation.

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<sup>50</sup> E. Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), pp. 66-75. Cf. idem, "The Role of Miniature Painting in Mural Decoration", in: K. Weitzmann etc., *The Place of Book Illumination in Byzantine Art* (Princeton, N.J., 1975), pp. 121-135.

PAULINUS NOLANUS, CARMEN 26:  
THE THREAT OF WAR, ST. FELIX, AND OLD  
TESTAMENT EXAMPLES OF THE POWER OF GOD  
AND OF HIS SAINTS<sup>1</sup>

W. Evenepoel

Introductory biographical reminder: Around 390 the Gallo-Roman Paulinus cut short a promising political career. Together with his Spanish wife he resided for a short time in Spain, where he was ordained a priest. In 395 he moved with his spouse to Nola to lead a monastic life, together with a number of like-minded friends, in the vicinity of the tomb of St. Felix, with whose cult he had become acquainted while a magistrate in Campania. For Paulinus St. Felix became the object of an intense personal veneration. As his friend Sulpicius Severus in Gaul was the promoter of Martin of Tours, so Paulinus would become, as priest-monk and later as bishop, and also as a builder and as the author of *Carmina* and *Epistulae*, the promoter of the cult of St. Felix of Nola.<sup>2</sup>

That Paulinus of Nola thoroughly familiarized himself with the Bible in quite a short time<sup>3</sup> is apparent not only from the numerous biblical quotations in his correspondence, but even from a cursory reading of his *Carmina*. When Paulinus opted for a monastic life and

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<sup>1</sup> Paulinus of Nola is cited in the edition of G. De Hartel: *Sancti Pontii Meropii Paulini Nolani Opera*: I. *Epistulae*; II. *Carmina*. Recensuit et commentario critico instruxit G. De Hartel (CSEL, 29-30; Vienna, 1894). There is a misprint in v. 219 of *Carm.* 26: *sic* is to be read instead of *si*. See Klaus Kohlwes, *Christliche Dichtung und stilistische Form bei Paulinus von Nola* (Bonn, 1979), p. 192, n. 21. The English versions of passages quoted from *Carm.* 26 have been taken from *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola*, translated and annotated by P.G. Walsh, *Ancient Christian Writers*, 40; New York, 1975).

<sup>2</sup> For the life of Paulinus of Nola see Joseph T. Lienhard, *Paulinus of Nola and Early Western Monasticism*. With a Study of the Chronology of his Works and an Annotated Bibliography, 1879-1976 (Köln-Bonn, 1977).

<sup>3</sup> For Paulinus of Nola and the Bible in general, see Lienhard 1977 (n. 2), pp. 128-34: "Paulinus and the Bible"; *Paolino di Nola, I carmi*. Introduzione, traduzione, note e indici a cura di Andrea Ruggiero (Roma, 1990), pp. 81-5: "Presenza della Bibbia"; Sandro Leanza, "Aspetti esegetici dell'opera di Paolino di Nola", *Atti del Convegno XXXI Cinquantenario della morte di S. Paolino di Nola (431-1981)* (Roma, 1983), pp. 67-91.



sought advice from the experienced monk Jerome, the latter in his letters 53 and 58 told him in no uncertain terms to acquire a profound knowledge of the Scriptures under expert guidance<sup>4</sup>: *semper in manu tua sacra sit lectio*, he writes in 58,6 (CSEL, 54, ed. I. Hilberg, p. 535). In his turn Paulinus himself in *Carm.* 22,1-2 advised the more philosophically inclined poet Jovius to make the Bible the foundation of his poetry: *sacris ... carmina libris condere*. Although Paulinus never became a biblical specialist like the philologist Jerome,<sup>5</sup> still the Bible for him became a fixed frame of reference, and it largely defined his spirituality.

In recent years the omnipresence of the Bible in Paulinus' correspondence and *Carmina* has been regarded more positively than before: it is now accepted that the references to the Scripture are not mere embellishments but are of essential importance. The Old and New Testaments (hereafter: OT and NT) were for Paulinus the basis of Christian doctrine and one of the primary sources of inspiration of his poetry. The Bible in his eyes also offers proof of God's *providentia* and *potentia* and is furthermore rich in moral lessons.<sup>6</sup> The NT appears somewhat more frequently in Paulinus' writings than the OT. The OT is represented in his *Carmina* mainly by Genesis, Exodus and the Psalms, the NT above all by the Gospels, the Acts, Paul's Letters to the Christians of Rome, Corinth and Ephesus, and lastly the Apocalypse.<sup>7</sup> Among Paulinus' earliest Christian poems are three Psalm paraphrases (*Carm.* 7, 8 and 9) that leave the impression that he may for a moment have been thinking of a metrical recasting of all the Psalms. As for the presence of the Bible in the *Carmina* of Paulinus Nolanus, it is primarily these Psalm paraphrases that have

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. John R. Wachel, *Classical and Biblical Elements in Selected Poems of Paulinus of Nola* (diss. Univ. of Iowa, 1978), pp. 153ff.

<sup>5</sup> It must be noted that he sometimes misconceives what the Bible actually says; such errors are usually indicated by Walsh. These are not instances where Paulinus takes liberties with the biblical text, but rather what could be called cases of sloppiness.

<sup>6</sup> See in connection with the significance of the Bible for Paulinus, Ruggiero 1990 (n. 3), p. 84.

<sup>7</sup> For the book of Genesis Ruggiero 1990 (n. 3), pp. 82-4 lists 64 references, for Exodus 35, and for the Psalms 121; for the Gospels 95 + 35 + 76 + 56, for the Acts 35, for Rom. 38, Cor. 46 + 21, Eph. 28, and for Apocalypse 25. Cf. in general Walsh 1975 (n. 1) (although the latter has not added up the references). Such lists of references must, for various reasons, be handled with caution, but they do give a certain indication of the relative weight that can be accorded to the various biblical books within a given author's work.

been examined as well as his paraphrase of Luke's pericopes on St. John the Baptist (*Carm.* 6).<sup>8</sup> Some research has also been done on Paulinus' biblical text, in particular on the Psalm texts he used.<sup>9</sup> As Paulinus often quotes from memory, adapts quotations to the metre of his *Carmina*, and also contaminates citations, such research is by no means simple.<sup>10</sup> Lastly, it has also been examined which early Christian authors played a role in Paulinus' use of the Bible. Apart from Jerome, who has already been cited as Paulinus' mentor in this context, the names of Hilary, Ambrose and Gregory of Elvira should be mentioned. It has been argued that Paulinus also read Greek biblical exegetes, more specifically Origen.<sup>11</sup>

Before proceeding to a more detailed and concrete discussion of a significant instance of Paulinus' use of the Bible, viz. *Carm.* 26, I would like to offer a few general observations on the presence of the Scriptures in Paulinus' *Carmina* as a whole.

As for the instruments at our disposal: Hartel, the editor of Paulinus Nolanus in the CSEL<sup>12</sup>, provides very few references for the *Carmina*: not only are they lacking for common biblical formulae, but also for certain factual data that come from the Bible<sup>13</sup>. Walsh, in his translation of Paulinus' *Carmina*<sup>14</sup>, offers more than Hartel but less than Ruggiero<sup>15</sup>, who is important e.g. for his addenda in connection with the Psalms but who also often adduces references to verses connected only in a rather general way with certain biblical passages<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. P. Flury, "Das sechste Gedicht des Paulinus von Nola", *Vigiliae Christianae*, 27 (1973), pp. 129-45; S. Prete, "Paolino di Nola, La parafrasi biblica della laus Iohannis (carm. 6)", *Augustinianum*, 14 (1974), pp. 625-35; Antonio V. Nazzaro, "La parafrasi salmica di Paolino di Nola", *Atti del Convegno XXXI Cinquantenario di Paolino di Nola* 1983 (n. 3), pp. 93-115.

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. Rosalba A. Rallo Freni, "Il testo dei salmi nell' utilizzazione dell' opera di Paolino di Nola", *Atti del Convegno XXXI Cinquantenario di Paolino di Nola* 1983 (n. 3), pp. 231-52.

<sup>10</sup> See Ruggiero 1990 (n. 3), p. 84.

<sup>11</sup> See Leanza 1983 (n. 3). Not everyone is convinced that Paulinus had a sound knowledge of Greek.

<sup>12</sup> See n. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Thus one finds biblical references at *Carm.* 26,219-20, but not at vv. 221-6 and vv. 227-9.

<sup>14</sup> See n. 1.

<sup>15</sup> See n. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Ad *Carm.* 12,22 (*pandere iter*); 15,105 (*servire deo*); 18,354 (*vota solvere*); 20,217-8 (*reddere votum*).

As regards the OT, Paulinus refers mainly to striking events; to the Psalms he reverts frequently and spontaneously when singing God's praises (see e.g. *Carm.* 21,272ff.); from the Evangelists and Paul he borrows fundamental concepts, and the Apocalypse provides him with numerous images and representations (e.g. more than once *draco* / *serpens antiquus*). As a poet Paulinus very often refers explicitly to the Bible, in particular to important biblical events, e.g. with phrases such as *ut scriptura canit*, *ut quondam*, *velut ille olim*, *ut apostolus ait*, *unde et propheta dicit*, *ut tamquam*. Biblical passages that return more than once in the *Carmina* are:<sup>17</sup> Matthew 7,14: "How narrow the gate and close the way that leads to life! And few there are who find it"; Matthew 11,30: "For my yoke is easy, and my burden light" (clearly the passage most frequently quoted in the *Carmina*); 2 Cor. 5,17: "If then any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the former things have passed away, behold, they are made new"; 2Tim. 4,8: "There is laid up for me a crown of justice".

The remainder of the present paper will concentrate on the presence of the Bible in *Carm.* 26. This poem of 429 verses is the eighth of the *Carmina natalicia*, the anniversary poems Paulinus of Nola composed annually on the occasion of the feast of St. Felix of Nola (14 January). I have chosen it for discussion not because it is a typical example of Paulinus' use of the Bible in the *Carmina natalicia*, but because it demonstrates a very marked dependence on the Bible, in particular the OT, and a very clear indication of what the Bible meant to Paulinus of Nola.

It is 14 January 402<sup>18</sup>: Alaric has invaded Italy and the shadow of imminent war hangs over the peninsula. Under these circumstances the anxiety of the faithful is extreme. Had it not been said that the christianized Roman empire would enjoy divine protection? A cheerful and confident celebration of the feast of St. Felix seems out of the question. That is the problem. In *Carm.* 26 Paulinus will do his utmost to restore the confidence of the faithful in St. Felix and in Christ.

In the following analysis attention will be devoted to the meaning of the Bible in this situation and to Paulinus' concrete use of the

<sup>17</sup> See the indexes of Hartel 1894 (n. 1), Walsh 1975 (n. 1) and Ruggiero 1990 (n. 3).

<sup>18</sup> See e.g. Walsh 1975 (n. 1), p. 403. For more details see e.g. Lienhard 1977 (n. 2), pp. 160-1.

Scripture in his text. To my knowledge *Carm.* 26 has hitherto been discussed in detail by Klaus Kohlwes in his dissertation *Christliche Dichtung und stilistische Form bei Paulinus von Nola* (Bonn, 1979)<sup>19</sup> and by François Heim, *La théologie de la victoire de Constantin à Théodose* (Paris, 1992)<sup>20</sup>; occasional references to their analyses will be made in what follows.

The introductory section of the poem in my opinion runs to v. 79.<sup>21</sup> The underlying idea is: we may be living in trying times, yet let this be a festive day. Even though war is threatening in the distance, we should still celebrate the feast of St. Felix in complete liberty. For faith does not lose sight of what must be done. With *quare* (v. 11) and *ergo* (v. 17) Paulinus draws the conclusion the faithful too must draw: he emphatically urges them to dispel their sorrow and turn their attention to St. Felix, who on this very day entered eternal life: *perpetuus* is repeated in *aeternus* (vv. 15-16). And in vv. 22-28 Paulinus states that as a believer, even were he a prisoner of the Goths, he would still celebrate the feast of St. Felix in full freedom. Note the meaningful repetition of *pīus* / *pietas* in v. 9 and v. 27, and of *liber* in v. 7 *pax libera* and v. 28 *liber amor*.

Vv. 29 ff, with *nunc igitur* (v. 29), a prolongation of *quare* (v. 11) and *ergo* (v. 17), and *quamvis ... tamen* (vv. 29-31), continuing the often recurring basic scheme in vv. 1-28<sup>22</sup>, summarize what goes before, and vv. 31-32:

nos tamen in domino stabilis fiducia Christo  
roboret et recto fixis pede mentibus armet,<sup>23</sup>

express unambiguously what Paulinus wants to say: unwavering confidence in Christ will give us fortitude, strengthened by Him the

<sup>19</sup> Viz. pp. 180-215; see also pp. 246-58.

<sup>20</sup> Viz. pp. 293-322. Heim (p. 293) states his position as follows: "De fait, aucun écrivain de l'époque n'a poussé aussi loin le mépris de l'action humaine et, en sens inverse, sa confiance en l'aide de Dieu; pourvu que les Romains manifestent foi et pitié à son égard, Dieu les sauvera des mains des barbares." Paulinus indeed underlines very emphatically the importance of God's help in *Carm.* 26, but this does not in my view imply that for him human action was of no importance. In assessing Paulinus' *Carm.* 26 one must take into account the specific context and the rhetorical element in the formulations.

<sup>21</sup> See Hartel 1894 (n. 1), p. 249. For Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 181 the introductory section ends at v. 69. See below.

<sup>22</sup> Viz. in vv. 5/6, 6/7, 11/2, 22/25, 27/8. Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 182 also points to the regular reappearance of the antithesis in question.

<sup>23</sup> "So now ... our constant trust in Christ the Lord must strengthen and equip us with minds intent on the direct way."

faithful will not vacillate. In v. 32 *recto* ... *pede* we recognize Psalm 26,12 (*iuxta Hebraeos*), viz. *Pes meus stetit in recto*, just before Paulinus will allude explicitly to the OT. Indeed, in v. 35 *ut quondam* Paulinus for the first time refers the faithful quite explicitly to the OT, viz. Exodus 12<sup>24</sup>: Despite the fact that a menacing enemy forced them to make haste, Moses and the Israelites did not fail to celebrate the Passover. Paulinus has somewhat revised the relationship of the events in Exodus 12 in order to make the passage fit into the introductory section of *Carm.* 26. In *licet* (v. 37) ... *tamen* (v. 39) (cf. also v. 41 with *licet*) one recognizes the basic structure of vv. 1-28, and *liber* of vv. 7 and 28 is meaningfully reiterated in v. 39 *libertate tamen devoti pectoris*. In vv. 43-4 Paulinus suggestively mentions the victory over the Egyptians, which in view of the proper function of the *exemplum* is not strictly necessary; it is clear that Paulinus, through his broader elaboration of the Biblical parallel, is taking his argument a step further: here already he makes it known that faith is the basis of victory. In the elaboration of the *exemplum* Paulinus, in keeping with the then current exegesis, regards the blood of the slaughtered lambs as a prefiguration of the blood of Christ<sup>25</sup>. In the parenthesis vv. 45-54 he opposes the Christian and the Jewish Paschal feasts and inveighs against the Jews. Kohlwes<sup>26</sup> argues that the digression is not functional and that it disturbs. Indeed, in the immediate context no precise function can be specified, yet within the broader context of the *Carmen* the digression has a clear function: these verses are in line with the elucidation of the blood of the lambs and fit in a lengthy series of verses which, at a more profound level, make Christ the nucleus and reference point of the entire poem<sup>27</sup>. Only after the digression is the circle—the *exemplum* from the past, the present situation—closed, v. 55:

sic igitur modo<sup>28</sup> nos turbato in tempore laeti<sup>29</sup> etc.

And again the words *pius* and *pietas* appear (v. 56 and v. 57).

<sup>24</sup> Hartel 1894 (n. 1), ad loc., refers erroneously to Genesis 12; at v. 94 he also refers to Gen. in lieu of Exodus.

<sup>25</sup> See e.g. Jean Daniélou, *Bible et liturgie* (Paris, 1958), pp. 220ff. and pp. 395ff.

<sup>26</sup> Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 183.

<sup>27</sup> See in particular, in addition to v. 31, vv. 105ff., 119, 143ff., 157, 200/1, 338, 345, 347, 377.

<sup>28</sup> *Modo* here means "now", as is also the case below. Cf. Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 183, n. 4.

<sup>29</sup> "So now let us be ... joyful in a time of turmoil, ..."

In vv. 59 ff. Paulinus dwells on *pietas* a little longer. Faith means *salus*, especially if we focus our attention on St. Felix. *Salus* is a term that returns continually throughout the poem<sup>30</sup>. In vv. 70 ff. the introduction is concluded with the idea that one need not fear weapons and armies which are for that matter provided by the *ira dei* to punish our faults and improve our behaviour: vv. 72-3 *ut formidine mortis / excitet ad curam vitae torpentia corda*<sup>31</sup>. Paulinus continues in this vein, in his own inimitable way, pointedly and with paradoxes. The notion does not return explicitly in *Carmen* 26<sup>32</sup>, but can be found in Judges 4,1 ff, 2 Kings 17,1, Esther 14,6, and Daniel 3,26 ff., passages which will all be used by Paulinus<sup>33</sup>! Esther 14,6 e.g. reads:

Peccavimus in conspectu tuo  
et idcirco tradidisti nos  
in manus inimicorum nostrorum.

With v. 80:

Prisca retractemus sanctorum exempla parentum<sup>34</sup>

Paulinus proceeds to the treatment of the central theme of *Carm.* 26<sup>35</sup>: faith and prayer on the one hand, and God's *potentia* on the other, form the basis of salvation and victory. In the formulations of vv. 80ff. the link is laid in various ways with the preceding verses of the introductory section. The idea of war as a just punishment (vv. 71-2) resounds in v. 81 *merita ... verbera, non armis neque viribus* (v. 70) in *non armis ... nec muris* (v. 82), the thoughts on *salus* in vv. 58ff. recur in vv. 83ff.

Later on Paulinus will offer three elaborated examples; but he begins with three shorter *exempla* that demonstrate the power of prayer. He impresses upon the faithful the *cura precandi* (v. 85). God's

<sup>30</sup> See besides v. 58, vv. 83/4, 105, 146, 231 and 393.

<sup>31</sup> "God is trying to rouse our sluggish hearts to take thought for life by inspiring us with fear for death."

<sup>32</sup> Implicitly it does, viz. where it is said in vv. 102/3 and 111 that we should not fear the earthly enemy, but God.

<sup>33</sup> In this connection Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 185, n. 8 points specifically to Judges. In the same note, and also further (p. 192), he wrongly posits that the idea that the threat of war was willed by God is also present in vv. 217-29.

<sup>34</sup> "Let us contemplate the ancient examples of saintly forbears."

<sup>35</sup> V. 80 *Prisca retractemus sanctorum exempla parentum* is in my view the clearly marked beginning of the second part of *Carm.* 26; in line with this verse lie vv. 195-6, which Kohlwes also regards as the start of the third part of the poem. See Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 190.

power is defined somewhat tritely, namely with the idea that it is He who makes the sun shine after the rain (vv. 89-91). The power of prayer is shown by three biblical examples (vv. 92-3 *quanta precum virtus ... doceat*): *luctu servata Nineve*<sup>36</sup> (v. 93), *Moyse prece victus Amalec* (v. 94), *Aman sanctae prece perditus Esther* (v. 95)<sup>37</sup>, from, respectively, Jonah 3, Exodus 17 (viz. 8-16), and Esther 7 but also 4,15ff. and 14,1ff. This is the second mention of Moses, who reappears regularly throughout *Carm.* 26. Only in connection with the third *exemplum* does one detail receive further elaboration<sup>38</sup>. Vv. 99ff. attach to the examples a number of reflections on the fact that the faithful must rely on the Lord. Note *fides innixa deo* (v. 99) and *confixa deo* (v. 101). Let the enemy trust their walls and legions, we are strengthened by *crucis invictae signum* (v. 106); and further: *armati ... deo ... non quaerimus arma / corporis* (vv. 107-8). After these thoughts Paulinus again specifically and explicitly directs the faithful and his readers to the Bible (vv. 114-118):

Recolamus abhinc signata sacratiss  
gesta patrum libris, et perspice qui potiore  
praesidio fuerint, quos urbs circumdata magnis  
absque deo muris an quos sine moenibus urbis  
vallabat socio virtus divina favore<sup>39</sup>.

The formulary is closely related to that of vv. 103ff. and at the same time forms the appropriate and direct preamble to the treatment of the conquest of the walled city of Jericho by Joshua (vv. 114/9-131) (cf. Joshua 6): v. 119 *illam dico urbem quam perdidit acer Iesus*<sup>40</sup> refers directly and precisely to *urbs circumdata magnis / absque deo muris*.

Joshua is called Iesus (cf. already Acts 7,45 and Hebr. 4,8) and Paulinus in v. 120 expressly draws attention to this. Like the pascha

<sup>36</sup> See for the use of *luctus* Benedict., *Regula* 25,6 in *paenitentiae luctu*.

<sup>37</sup> "The power of prayers ... is the lesson we must learn from Nineveh saved by its grief, from Amalek overcome by the devoted prayer of aged Moses, from ... Haman destroyed by the supplication of holy Esther."

<sup>38</sup> Viz. that of the wood of the cross which Aman had destined for the servant of God and on which he himself was hanged. Paulinus writes *crux* where the Vulgate and the Vetus Itala (ed. Sabatier) have *lignum* in Esther 7,9. *Crux* is a significant word throughout this poem. Cf. R.P.H. Green, *The Poetry of Paulinus of Nola. A Study of his Latinity* (Bruxelles, 1971), p. 70-1: in connection with the cross Paulinus in his poetry uses the terms *lignum*, *arbor ligni*, *lignum crucis*, etc.

<sup>39</sup> "Let us hereafter recall the deeds of our ancestors recorded in the consecrated books. Observe who had the better protection—those enclosed in a city girt by great walls but without God, or those defended by God's strength and friendly support but without city walls."

<sup>40</sup> "I refer to the city destroyed by the eager Joshua, ..."

this event is also set in a christological perspective<sup>41</sup>. With a slight mistake in the presentation of the details concerning Joshua 6<sup>42</sup>, Paulinus points out how the latter achieved victory *ope divina* (v. 123) and *numeri virtute potentis* (v. 127), thereby indicating the power of the sacred number 7<sup>43</sup>.

The inhabitants of Jericho perished with the exception of Rahab. In vv. 132ff. Paulinus dwells on the role and the fate of the *meretrix* (v. 132 and v. 143) (vv. 132-149), who was *fraude bona fallax* (v. 137) and who *pietate dei meritum pietatis adepta est* (v. 134). Rahab too proves that *pietas* means salvation: cf. besides v. 134 also v. 136 *pie*, and further *salutem* in v. 146 and *salvabat* in v. 149. In keeping with the then current exegesis Paulinus sees a mystic bond between the sign that she gave the Israelites with a *puniceo ... vellere* (v. 145)<sup>44</sup> and the redemptive role of Christ's blood (vv. 148-9)<sup>45</sup>:

Hinc cape quantum  
ipse cruor valeat, cuius salvabat imago.<sup>46</sup>

This is an explicit argument *a minore ad maius*<sup>47</sup>; in v. 43 *et ficto Christi iam sanguine victor*, in connection with the Jewish pascha, the same type of reasoning is in fact implicitly present. As in the case of the parenthesis vv. 45ff. Kohlwes again overlooks the function of vv. 147ff.<sup>48</sup>: we are again dealing with one of a long series of references to Christ, the point of reference of all *sancti* and *sanctae*. In v. 148 *crucis invictae signum* of v. 106 reappears.

Paulinus of Nola as a rule does not offer many narrative details of any biblical story, but emphatically elaborates the significant core data in varied wordings and then attaches to them the lessons to sustain the faithful<sup>49</sup>. By way of two generalizing considerations in vv. 150 ff. (with *confidere Christo* and *credere cuncta deo virtutum*) Paulinus

<sup>41</sup> See Daniélou 1958 (n. 25).

<sup>42</sup> See Walsh 1975 (n. 1), ad loc. (p. 404, n. 15).

<sup>43</sup> On the power of the number 7, see Walsh 1975 (n. 1), p. 404, n. 16.

<sup>44</sup> In Jos. 2,18 the Vulgate has *coccineus*.

<sup>45</sup> See Daniélou, *Sacramentum futuri* (Paris, 1950), pp. 217-232, and also Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 187, n. 11.

<sup>46</sup> "Grasp from this the great power of Christ's blood, seeing that its representation brought such safety."

<sup>47</sup> See Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 187.

<sup>48</sup> Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 190.

<sup>49</sup> Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 188, points to Paulinus' free rendering of the biblical story of Hezekiah (= Ezechias).



conducts us to four *exempla* which unlike the fortunes of Joshua and Rahab are only briefly recalled: David and Goliath (cf. 1 Samuel 17)<sup>50</sup>, the crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 14), and then, in the wake of Rahab and via the introductory phrase *femineas quoque personas virtute virili / induit alma fides*<sup>51</sup> (vv. 159-60), Deborah (Judges 4)<sup>52</sup> and Judith (Judith 13).

After the general pronouncement v. 166 *nuda fides armata deo est*, Paulinus again presents a more elaborated *exemplum*, that of Hezekiah (= Ezechias) who vanquished his opponent *virtute fidei* (v. 166) and *una ... prece* (vv. 178-9) (vv. 166b-194) (cf. 2 Kings 18-19). Paulinus recalls how a large number of soldiers of the powerful enemy's great army was miraculously felled at night, through the intervention of an angel of the Lord. Paulinus and his fellows will surely have wished that the same would happen to Alaric! Like the biblical tale of David and Goliath (viz. 1 Samuel 17,45 & 47), the story of Hezekiah (viz. 2 Kings 18,22 & 30) also contains several general statements on the power of the Lord and the importance of faith in God, statements that actually express the main theme of the *Carmen* we are currently discussing.

In vv. 195-6, the beginning of the third part of *Carm.* 26, Paulinus switches to the present:

Tunc velut Ezechiae fuit interventor Esaias,  
ad dominum nobis isto sit tempore Felix<sup>53</sup>.

Just as the intervention of Esaias (= Isaias) was decisive for Hezekiah (= Ezechias), so Felix must now plead Nola's cause before God. Strangely enough Esaias is not even mentioned in Paulinus' version of the story as told in vv. 166-194<sup>54</sup>! Felix assumes the burden of man as Christ did (vv. 200ff.). In this connection Christ's cross is explicitly mentioned (vv. 201-2): besides words such as *pietas* and *salus*, *crux* is another crucial term in *Carm.* 26<sup>55</sup>. Let us seek refuge in Felix, our patron (v. 211).

<sup>50</sup> Formally a direct link is laid between the general consideration and the first *exemplum* through *talīs / tali* (vv. 152-3).

<sup>51</sup> "A holy faith has endowed women's character with the strength of men, ..."

<sup>52</sup> Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 187, speaks of Jael.

<sup>53</sup> "At that time Isaias was mediator for Hezekiah. Likewise let Felix now be our go-between to the Lord."

<sup>54</sup> See Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 188, n. 13.

<sup>55</sup> Here too Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 191, speaks of an "excursus".

For that matter, the saints' concern for human sinners is nothing new (v. 216). Compare (again) the biblical past. As in vv. 92ff. Paulinus again points emphatically to the power of prayer by way of three briefly elaborated *exempla*<sup>56</sup>: in a parallel manner it is shown how through prayer Moses (Exodus 32), Lot (Gen. 19) and Elias (1 Kings 17) saved sinners: *populus*, *Segor* and *terrae* respectively. The parallelism is expressed in *precatum* (v. 219), *prece* (v. 223) and *precibus* (v. 227). The section is concluded with (vv. 230-2):

Ut quondam hos habuit vetus aetas, sic modo nostra  
Felicem sortita salus petat omne quod audet  
quodque cupit tali speret confisa patrono<sup>57</sup>.

Vv. 195-232 thus make an emphatic link between the *sancti* of the Old Testament and St. Felix, the patron of Nola.

Having thus explicitly established this connection, Paulinus turns to Felix in prayer in vv. 233ff.<sup>58</sup>. This prayer, together with vv. 195-232, has a pivotal function. Gradually the emphasis is shifted from the *sancti* of the OT to Felix, but with repeated references to the OT. To the very end Paulinus will keep alluding to the convincing great deeds of God in the OT. Paulinus' repeated allusions to the OT and his continuous drawing of parallels, even after he has shifted from the great moments of the distant past to Felix, is a fundamental feature of this poem and is connected, I think, with the fact that it is not easy for Paulinus to convince the faithful that Felix possesses the same power and offers the same protection as his predecessors from the Old Testament.

The prayer to Felix commences as follows (vv. 233-6):

Sancte deo dilecte, dei tu dextera, Felix,  
esto, precor, nobis tu munitissima turris.  
Nam deus Abraham deus est tuus et deus Isaac  
et deus Israel tuus est deus ...<sup>59</sup>

The God of Felix is also the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

<sup>56</sup> Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 169 also makes the link with vv. 92ff.

<sup>57</sup> "Such were the men whom those of ancient days had as their support, and likewise we have Felix for our salvation. Our confidence in such a patron must lead us to ask for all we dare, and to hope for all we desire."

<sup>58</sup> Hartel 1894 (n. 1) and Ruggiero 1990 (n. 3) rightly start a new paragraph with v. 233; otherwise Walsh 1975 (n. 1).

<sup>59</sup> "Holy Felix, loved by God, God's right hand, I pray you, be our impregnable tower. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel is your God also."

Compare e.g. Exodus 3,6 and 4,5<sup>60</sup>. This is emphasized extremely forcefully with the aid of the repetitions *deus est tuus, tuus est deus*, and *ipse tuus deus est, ipse tuus deus est*. This is fundamental. The God of Felix, our God, is the mighty God of the OT. In my view, the formulae are undeniably linked to similar formulations in the song of victory the Israelites sang after they had traversed the Red Sea (Exodus 15,2). The *exempla* from the OT can raise confidence only if one fully accepts that we are dealing with the same God, the God who again and again led the Israelites to victory.

Praying to St. Felix, Paulinus in vv. 236ff. first surveys God's mighty deeds reported in Exodus (13, 14, 16, 17) and Josuah (10). In vv. 249-254 the author then implores Felix to take care of Rome<sup>61</sup>. The phrasing of this request is based on Josuah's miraculous intervention recalled just before. In vv. 255ff. Felix is linked with Daniel in the lions' den (Dan. 6 and 14) and with the youths in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3). Just as Daniel overcame the wild lions through prayer, so Felix, with the help of Christ, will tame the wild barbarians (v. 257 *effera barbaries*). As the three youths, singing hymns, overcame the flames, so Felix, with God's help, will extinguish the fires of war (v. 272 *bellorum ... ignes*) menacing Italy. Notice how Paulinus speaks of the enemy and of war in terms that constitute a direct link with the tales of Daniel and of the three youths in the furnace<sup>62</sup>.

Paulinus knows that, by urging Felix to such rescuing intercession in these terms, he might well appear *insipiens* and a *rudis hospes* (v. 276)<sup>63</sup>: indeed Felix need not be reminded of the great deeds done by his predecessors, for in recent years he has shown that he too can be a powerful saviour. In vv. 276-306 Paulinus tries to emphasize, through repetition and forceful formulae, that Felix is indeed the equal of the patriarchs and apostles. To Felix he says (vv. 280-2):

Sat mihi sunt, Felix, virtutum exempla tuarum,  
nec tibi pauperior Christus caelestia fundit  
munera quam patribus, quorum generosa propago es<sup>64</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> See further Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 195, n. 27.

<sup>61</sup> In the first verse of the passage we find *Romani*, in the last *Romana*.

<sup>62</sup> See also Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 196.

<sup>63</sup> I do not think Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), pp. 198-9 has assessed the passage in question correctly.

<sup>64</sup> "I have witnessed sufficient examples of your powers, Felix; Christ pours out his heavenly gifts no less richly on you than on those ancestors whose noble progeny you are."

And further (vv. 287-9):

nec, si species operum tibi dispar,  
non similis virtus; diversa est gratia vobis,  
gloria par, ...<sup>65</sup>

Referring to the *ferae* defied by Daniel and to the *ignes* overcome by the three youths, Paulinus vigorously argues that the power of Felix, who is able to defeat devils, is at least equal to that of his predecessors. His might is in no way inferior to that of his great forebears.

To prove this Paulinus adduces in vv. 307ff. the story of a single great feat of Felix (*de multis unum*, v. 307<sup>66</sup>), an exorcism. The story proper is brief (vv. 309-323, but see also vv. 348b-353), the commentary rather extensive (vv. 321-394). Paulinus presents the possessed as even more voracious than the Ovidian Erysichthon,<sup>67</sup> who is not named. Surely, continues Paulinus, you who have witnessed the curing of this person possessed, do you not think exorcizing a devil is a stronger feat than a victory over wild animals and fire? Notice *feras* and *flammantibus* in v. 305 and v. 327 and the emphatic repetition of *nonne feras ignesque domat*<sup>68</sup> (v. 325 and v. 329).

Of Felix's action Paulinus furthermore says (vv. 343-5):

Par hoc operi est opus illi,  
quo merram tristem sacri dulcedine ligni  
in populi potus crucis inmutavit imago<sup>69</sup>.

Paulinus herewith refers to an episode in Exodus already alluded to earlier in the poem (Exodus 15). *Crux* is the key word, referring to the past as well as to the present: see *crucis* in v. 345 and v. 347<sup>70</sup>. Felix, v. 346 *pietate potens*, has cured the possessed through the power of the cross, just as bitter water was formerly altered through the power of wood, the prefiguration of the cross. Of the man Paulinus says that

<sup>65</sup> "Even if the appearance of your achievements is not the same, your powers are like theirs. Your charism differs, but your fame is equal ..."

<sup>66</sup> See Klaus Thraede, "Untersuchungen zum Ursprung und zur Geschichte der christlichen Poesie I", *JbAC*, 4 (1961), pp. 117 ff. in connection with *pauca e multis*.

<sup>67</sup> *Ov. Met.* 8,738-878.

<sup>68</sup> "Does he not master beasts and flames ...?"

<sup>69</sup> "This achievement was as great as that achieved by the type of the cross when through the sweetness of its sacred wood it transformed the harsh and bitter liquid into drinking water for God's people."

<sup>70</sup> *Virga* in v. 338 in connection with Felix's activity must refer to the cross; Paulinus uses this word, already thinking of the biblical events to follow in vv. 343ff. and vv. 354ff. Note *crucis imago* in v. 345 and v. 356.

he, like the water, now *dulce sapit* (v. 353). *Potens* returns in connection with Felix in v. 355, v. 361 and v. 395. Compare also v. 303 and v. 338.

Paulinus further likens Felix's activity to that of Moses whose *virga* (v. 356)<sup>71</sup> devoured the snakes of the *magi* (Exodus 7). Compare *virga* in vv. 157, 338, 374 and 377; *virga* refers without any doubt to *crux*. Here too the basic equality is stressed (vv. 357-61):

Cernimus ecce pares domini caelestis adesse  
ad meritum Felicis opes, operum quoque formas  
congruere et quaecumque patres in corpore sancti  
ediderint documenta dei sine corpore vivum  
in Christo Felicem agere etc.<sup>72</sup>

Compare *cernite* in v. 370 with *cernimus*. This basic equality between what happened in the OT through God's intervention, and what Felix has done now, also finds expression in vv. 366-9:

Omnes quisque suo radiabunt lumine sancti  
dissimili fulgore pares nec iudice Christo  
alter in alterius meriti dispendia crescent;  
Christus erit cunctis regnum lux vita corona.<sup>73</sup>

It should by now be clear that the demonstration of this equality is the key point of Paulinus' poem. He argues, he wants to prove, with every possible means and emphasis, that God can exercise through Felix the same victorious power as in the OT. It could perhaps be objected that Paulinus often varies themes and words repetitively, in other words, that it is more a matter of style than of substance. But in the case of *Carm.* 26 I harbour not the slightest doubt: Paulinus does his utmost to restore the damaged confidence in the powers of Felix and Christ. There are not only the repetitions; there is also the conception itself of the entire poem. Paulinus first points to the *exempla* from the biblical past. Then he says that the same power is active in Felix and he stresses that this is due to the same God. Next he relates

<sup>71</sup> Exodus 7,12 is about the staff of Aaron! Cf. Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 203, n. 40.

<sup>72</sup> "We can observe how the heavenly Lord makes resources as great as those of ancient days attend on Felix' merit, how even the shape of his deeds is in accord, how all that the patriarchs performed in the flesh, as proofs of the holy God, Felix achieves not in the flesh but through his life in Christ."

<sup>73</sup> "All the saints will have their own brightness, different in each case, yet equal. Christ's judgment will not advance one at the expense of another's deserving merit. All will have Christ as their kingdom, light, life, and crown."

a great deed of Felix, repeating again and again the link with God's major interventions in the OT. For the feats of the past as well as for those of the present he continuously states that we are dealing with the same God, and the christological perspective is regularly indicated. We will see below that Paulinus, on the level of the formulation, perseveres with this continuous coupling of the current situation with the great and persuasive *exempla* from the OT to the very end of the poem.

In v. 374, amid allusions to already mentioned *exempla*, there is one wholly new reference to the NT, isolated but prepared by vv. 370-1:

distinctos actu sed honore iugatos  
testamentorum veterisque novique magistros<sup>74</sup>;

in connection with the differences between God's men but also their essential equality Paulinus says that Peter, unlike Moses, did not split the waters with a *virga*, while Moses, unlike Peter, did not walk on the water (cf. Math. 14). The passage in question is concluded (vv. 378-9):

qui deus est veterum in sanctis, deus ipse novorum;  
quo data lex domino est, ex ipso gratia venit<sup>75</sup>.

V. 379 is based on John 1,17 *Quia lex per Moysen data est, gratia et veritas per Iesum Christum facta est*<sup>76</sup>.

As a continuation of vv. 233ff. we read again (vv. 380-2):

ille deus Danielis et ille trium puerorum  
Felicitis deus ipse deus nec se minor ipse est  
in sancto Felice deus, ...<sup>77</sup>

All can testify to this: *testes* in v. 384 and *testantes* in v. 390; cf. *testes* in v. 324 and further *cernimus* and *cernite*, cited above. We can see this with our own eyes.

All these reflections are tied to Paulinus' treatment of just one great feat of Felix, the *unum e multis* he announced. However, Paulinus proceeds with vv. 395-6:

<sup>74</sup> "Note how the teachers of the Old and New Testament differ in their deeds but are paired in glory, ..." See also already v. 284!

<sup>75</sup> "The God of the saints of old is also the God of the new. Grace has sprung from that Lord who issued the Law."

<sup>76</sup> See Ruggiero 1990 (n.3), ad loc.

<sup>77</sup> "The God of Daniel and of the three boys is also the God of Felix, and He is no less God in holy Felix ..."

Praeterita ut taceam meriti documenta potentis,  
novimus experti etc.

to a second wondrous feat of the mighty Felix, whereby *experti* continues *testes* and *testari* of the preceding verses, as does *vidimus* v. 401 for *cernimus* v. 387. Paulinus relates how Felix kept a fire away from his sanctuary. This tale is preluded by *Felicitis meritis et aquas et cedere flammās* in v. 394. It is the second testimony (*documenta*, v. 395; cf. *documenta* in v. 360) to Felix's power.<sup>78</sup>

After this section (vv. 395-412), with a second miraculous act of Felix, Paulinus now (v. 413) formulates his concluding prayer to the saint<sup>79</sup>:

Consimili modo nos, Felix, ope solve periclis etc.<sup>80</sup>

*Longe* in v. 415 of the conclusion recalls *longe* in v. 6 of the introduction. In formulating his final prayer Paulinus refers to yet a third wondrous deed: he reminds his readers how Felix diverted the water of a mountain stream and so saved Nola from a flood. *Longinquo* in v. 424 corresponds with *longe* in v. 415. Compare *male* in v. 417 of the conclusion with *male* in v. 22 of the introduction. In a lengthy comparison he prays to Felix to keep the stream of enemies away from Nola, now (*modo*, v. 425; cf. *modo* in v. 413), just as in the past. The phrasing of the final verses (vv. 426-9) once again repeats several elements of what has gone before<sup>81</sup>:

Manus in pia sacris  
finibus absistat, quibus est tua gratia vallum,  
atque tuam timeant hostes quasi daemones aulam,  
nec cruor haec violet quae flamma vel unda refugit<sup>82</sup>.

Felix's merciful action is for Nola like a *vallum* – cf. *turris* above in vv. 113 and 234 and *murus* in v. 114; Paulinus hopes that the enemy will

<sup>78</sup> Heim 1992 (n. 20), pp. 301ff., esp. p. 306, sees in Paulinus' argumentation three stages: (1) The Bible teaches us that God more than once intervened as a saviour for his people; (2) Felix's god is the God of the Bible; (3) Felix himself has already shown he can bring on God's saving intervention.

<sup>79</sup> This prayer in my opinion forms the brief finale of *Cam.* 26; Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 181 would have the conclusion commence at v. 384.

<sup>80</sup> "Felix, you must deliver us from our dangers by offering similar help."

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 208.

<sup>82</sup> "May wicked violence eschew this consecrated territory, which has your grace as its rampart. May the enemy emulate the demons, and fear your church; may no bloodshed pollute this shrine from which fire and stream have fled."

fear his sanctuary as the devils do – see the story of the man possessed – and that no blood will soil what chased away water and fire – see Felix's second and third miracles.

Let us conclude. Indeed a well-wrought poem and a well-constructed argument<sup>83</sup>. Celebration of the *dies natalis* of St. Felix in the wartime circumstances of the year 401-2 was not easy for the faithful. Did the Church not say that under Christian emperors the Roman empire enjoyed God's protection? How to explain, then, the presence of Alaric and his troops in Italy? In this situation Paulinus of Nola turns emphatically to the OT, where he finds convincing examples of the support God offers his people in its struggle against the enemy, examples of God's mighty actions to the advantage of those who have put their faith in Him.

Nowhere else in the *Carmina natalicia* does Paulinus so emphatically and continuously invoke the Bible. For in these poems the figure of St. Felix and the miracles he performed for those who had faith in him form the focal point. But in the winter of 401-2 war was so imminent that Paulinus could not produce just another *Carmen natalicium*. He had to take a different approach. To restore confidence Paulinus reverts to God's great deeds in the OT and links Felix's feats to them. In my opinion Paulinus did not merely have to cope with a general despair but also more in particular with considerable doubts concerning Felix's powers. What can the faithful expect from Felix, who had gained a certain reputation through healings and exorcisms? Paulinus tries to persuade them that Felix has the same power as the *sancti* of the OT and that the God of Felix is also the God of the OT, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Paulinus senses that to the inhabitants of Nola and to the pilgrims visiting Nola what Felix does is not really comparable with what God did for Israel. He therefore does his utmost to stress that we are still dealing with the same God and that the power of God's saints remains essentially the same.

Passages that reveal the psychological background against which Paulinus wrote his *Carmen natalicium* for that year are e.g.

Sat mihi sunt, Felix, virtutum exempla tuarum,  
nec tibi pauperior Christus caelestia fundit  
munera quam patribus ... (vv. 280-2)

<sup>83</sup> Walsh 1975 (n. 1), p. 405, n. 41 also voices his appreciation of the concept of *Carm.* 26. See further Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 180.



ille deus Danielis et ille trium puerorum  
 Felicis deus ipse deus nec se minor ipse est  
 in sancto Felice deus, etc. (vv. 380-2)<sup>84</sup>

Kohlwes<sup>85</sup> suggests that Paulinus, at least in rhetorical terms, implicitly puts Felix above the *sancti* of the OT. But I think Paulinus' first concern is to show that Felix is not their inferior.

Why such constant reference to the OT? Because it deals continuously with God's protection of His chosen people and because now too God's people is threatened. In the circumstances Paulinus of Nola, who in general refers more to the NT than to the OT, has rightly given pride of place to the OT, yet as already noted without neglecting Christ.<sup>86</sup>

A final remark. The following *Carmen natalicium*, no. 9 (*Carm.* 27), no longer mentions the (passed and partly averted) threat of war. But the introductory part of *Carm.* 21, vv. 1-46 (*Carmen natalicium* 13) of 407, does refer to an earlier threat of hostilities by the Goths<sup>87</sup>. I list briefly a few points that recall *Carm.* 26, but there are also significant differences.

Felix is called here *pacis ... patronus* (v. 6) but is in this function explicitly linked with Peter and Paul and (the) other martyrs (vv. 6-8):

Felix ... pacis et ipse patronus  
 cum patribus Paulo atque Petro et cum fratribus almis  
 martyribus regem regum exoravit etc.

For that matter, in the second half of the introductory section (vv. 25ff.) Paulinus says he will no longer dwell on the protection Felix provided against war since that was a deed performed not specifically and exclusively by him<sup>88</sup>! Therefore Paulinus states in v. 45 *privatos ... canam Felicis honores*: he will deal further only with Felix's specific merits.

<sup>84</sup> Heim 1992 (n. 20), p. 306 contends that with this explicit argumentation Paulinus is also trying to convince himself. On the other hand, with regard to Paulinus he speaks (p. 301) of "la candide confiance" and "une naïveté toute populaire". Pagan criticism of the Christians' reliance on the help of God and His saints in the struggle against the invading barbarians is found in Claudian, *Carm. min.* 50; see on this poem J. Vanderspoel, "Claudian, Christ and the Cult of the Saints", *Classical Quarterly*, 36 (1986), pp. 244-255.

<sup>85</sup> Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), pp. 200ff.

<sup>86</sup> See also in connection with OT and NT in this poem Heim 1992 (n. 20), p. 324.

<sup>87</sup> See Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 182, n. 3 and Walsh 1975 (n. 1), pp. 385-6. On *Carm.* 21 see also Heim 1992 (n. 20), pp. 310-3.

<sup>88</sup> See Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 201, n. 36.

In *Carm.* 26,249-254 Paulinus had asked Felix to take up the cause of Rome; here it is said (21,6-12), as already indicated, that he indeed prayed, together with the other martyrs, for the Roman cause to the king of kings. As in 26,70ff., it is pointed out that war has to do with God's ire (vv. 17-8):

cum furor accensus divinae motibus irae  
inmisso Latiis arderet in urbibus hoste<sup>89</sup>!

Compare *inmisso ... hoste* with 26,81 *inmissis ... bellis*. Here too we hear that victory was achieved *virtute dei*: compare 21,23 with e.g. 26,107 *armati deo* and v. 151 *deo virtutum*.

Text Paulinus Nolanus, *Carmen* 26 (ed. De Hartel):

- 1    Ecce dies nobis anno reuoluta peracto  
      inlustrem reuehit Felicis nomine lucem.  
      tempus erat laetis modo promere gaudia uerbis,  
      anxia si laetas paterentur tempora uoces.
- 5    sed tamen ista dies licet inter proelia nobis  
      laetitiae pacisque dies erit; horrida longe  
      bella fremant, nostris pax libera mentibus adsit.  
      laetitiae dulcem non obliuiscitur usum  
      mens adsueta piis sua soluere pectora uotis
- 10   et domino festis caste gaudere diebus.  
      quare inportunam quamuis sub tempore maesto  
      pellite tristitiam; bona gaudia, dulcia uerba,  
      omne pium laetumque die Felicis amemus,  
      natali sine fine die, quia natus in ista est
- 15   perpetuis Felix saeculis, qua corporis aeuum  
      functus ad aeternam migravit in aethera uitam.  
      ergo metus abeant tristes redeantque reffectis  
      gaudia pectoribus; fugiant decet omnia sanctum  
      maesta diem, tanti quem gloria confessoris
- 20   insignem cunctis per tempora tota diebus  
      elucere facit populisque frequentibus ornat.  
      hunc ego, si Geticis agerem male subditus armis,  
      inter et inmites celebrarem laetus Alanos,  
      et si multiugae premerent mea colla catenae,
- 25   captiuis animum membris non iungeret hostis,  
      pectore non uincto calcaret triste superba  
      seruitium pietas. licet inter barbara uincla  
      liber amor placitis caneret mea uota loquellis.  
      nunc igitur quamuis uarias uaga fama per oras

<sup>89</sup> See Kohlwes 1979 (n. 1), p. 185, n. 7.

- 30 terrificis pauidas feriat rumoribus aures,  
nos tamen in domino stabilis fiducia Christo  
roboret et recto fixis pede mentibus armet,  
nec pauor ater in hanc obducatur nubila lucem,  
quam deus aethereo Felicis honore serenat.
- 35 legifer ut quondam Pharii tellure tyranni  
pascha sacrum Moyses prima sub lege dicauit  
sanctaque tunc Iudaea, domo licet inpius illos  
maturare fugam ualida ui cogeret hostis,  
libertate tamen deuoti pectoris audax
- 40 nec turbante metu iussum sollemne reliquit,  
sed trepidans fugiensque licet diuina peregit  
festa, salutifero laetis epulatus in agno  
coetibus et ficto Christi iam sanguine uictor,  
duxit ouans laetas uicto Pharaone choreas
- 45 (inde fugae memores etiam nunc azyma sumunt  
Iudaei solo retinentes nomine gentem,  
infermentatis pulsi quia panibus olim  
Aegypto fecere fugam; paribus modo signis  
per patrios, sed iam per inania sabbata, ritus
- 50 antiqui recolunt uestigia grata timoris;  
nam frustra ueterem uacua sub imagine legem  
exercent, uerum nobis quia pascha repleuit  
unus pro cunctis patri datus hostia Christus,  
et quia corpus adest uitae, perit umbra figurae):
- 55 sic igitur modo nos turbato in tempore laeti,  
mente pia festum dilecti martyris omnes  
conlatis hilarae studiis pietatis agamus.  
forte magis pietas nobis dabit ista salutem,  
si nostras ideo libeat deponere curas,
- 60 ut confessori laetantia corda feramus,  
cuius honore deus gaudet, quia martyr honorem  
contempsit proprium domini pro nomine Christi,  
uilius ipse sibi, ut Christo pretiosior esset.  
propterea tali placeat gaudere patrono
- 65 natalemque diem sopiti pace beata  
martyris expositis laetantes ducere curis.  
hoc quoque deuotis aderit, si fortior extet  
nunc ad laetitiam affectus quam causa timoris  
ad consternandas obducto pectore mentes.
- 70 credite non armis neque uiribus esse timendos  
allophylum populos, quos propter crimina nostra  
offensi mouet ira dei, ut formidine mortis  
excitet ad curam uitae torpentia corda.  
ergo deum mitem saeuo timeamus in hoste,
- 75 absit ut hoste metus, quem formidare meremur  
non metuendo deum; placida quem pace remissi

- neglegimus saltem ui compellente tremamus,  
 placemus maerore humiles quem laeta ferentem  
 spernimus ex ipsa mox prosperitate superbi.
- 80     prisca retractemus sanctorum exempla parentum,  
 qui merita inmissis tolerantes uerbera bellis,  
 non armis sibi nec muris capienda putabant  
 praesidia. humanis opibus sperare salutem  
 nulla salus. nec enim mortem mortalia pellant.
- 85     ergo quibus curae tempus sit cura precandi  
 caelestem dominum, quo maesta aut laeta parantur,  
 qui solus praestare potest dicione superna,  
 rursus ut exactis renouentur gaudia curis.  
 hoc etenim regit et uariat deus arbiter usu
- 90     res hominum, ut semper succedant nubila sudis  
 atque iterum fugiant imbres redeunte sereno.  
 quanta precum uirtus, quae sit medicina parenti  
 flere deo, doceat luctu seruata Nineue  
 et senis inpensa Moysi prece uictus Amalec
- 95     et maledictus Aman sanctae prece perditus Esther,  
 qui bene poenarum uersa uice quae mala sanctis  
 miscuerat solus bibit inpius et cruce iusta,  
 quam famulo domini praefixerat, ipse pependit.  
       ergo fides innixa deo trepidantia firmet
- 100     pectora et in maesto securum tempore tempus  
 praesumat confisa deo, quia non metuendi  
 causa timere deum, quem quisquis non timet unum  
 omnia iure timet. fidant legionibus illi  
 perfugioque parent reparatis moenia muris,
- 105     nulla salutiferi quibus est fiducia Christi;  
 nos crucis inuictae signum et confessio munit,  
 armatique deo mentem non quaerimus arma  
 corporis; et quamquam membris uideamur inermes,  
 arma tamen gerimus, quibus et sub pace serena
- 110     contra incorporeos animis decernimus hostes.  
 nunc opus adiutore deo, solusque timendus,  
 quo sine et arma cadunt, per quem firmanentur et arma;  
 ipse intra muros turris tibi, qui sine muris  
 murus erit. recolamus abhinc signata sacrat
- 115     gesta patrum libris, et perspice qui potiore  
 praesidio fuerint, quos urbs circumdata magnis  
 absque deo muris an quos sine moenibus urbis  
 uallabat socio uirtus diuina fauore.  
 illam dico urbem quam perdidit acer Iesus,
- 120     mutatus proprium uirtutis nomine nomen,  
 quam non militiae solito de more subegit,  
 ut solitum est, longa dux obsidione laborans;  
 uerum ope diuina sacra per mysteria uibrans

- tela nec exercens tacitis exercitus armis  
 125 lustrauit cessante manu septemque diebus  
 septenos iterans sibi circa moenia gyros.  
 obtinuit captos numeri uirtute potentis  
 atque sacerdotum lituis clangore tremendo  
 fulmineos superae tonitrus imitantibus irae.  
 130 tunc qui diuitiis populus fidebat et urbe,  
 interiit mixtis inter sua tecta sepulchris.  
 sola Rahab meretrix, castam quae gessit iniqua  
 gente fidem, non freta suis euadere muris,  
 sed pietate dei meritum pietatis adepta est,  
 135 qua famulis domini tuto fuit hospita tecto  
 celatisque pie ciues inludit iniquos,  
 fraude bona fallax, animo mentita fideli.  
 hospitibus quia fida piis, infida profanis  
 ciuibus extiterat, uitam patriamque domumque  
 140 praelato contempta deo mox cuncta benigno  
 repperit in domino; quae si posuisset in urbe  
 praesidium, patriis cecidisset mixta ruinis  
 indefensa deo; meretrix sed mystica Christum  
 prouida pollutas empturum sanguine gentes,  
 145 puniceo proprium signauit uellere tectum  
 excepitque suam patria pereunte salutem,  
 significans illos mundo labente tegendos,  
 quos crucis inuictae signat cruor. hinc cape quantum  
 ipse cruor ualeat, cuius saluabat imago.  
 150 semper in omne bonum ualuit confidere Christo,  
 credere cuncta deo uirtutum, ponere solum  
 omnia summa deum; talis super omnia semper  
 arma fides ualuit; tali puer ille pusillus  
 robore grandis erat, qui spretis fortior armis  
 155 perculit armatum silicis uirtute gigantem.  
 arma fide semper, numquam cognouimus armis  
 indiguisse fidem. rupit mare uirga fidelis,  
 quod uacua arma fide cum principe mersit iniquo.  
 femineas quoque personas uirtute uirili  
 160 induit alma fides, mulier qua sancta peremit  
 terribilem Sisaram transfixum tempora palo;  
 terrentem magnos late populos Holofernem  
 arte pudicitiae deceptum callida Iudith  
 risit, in inpuro quae non polluta cubili  
 165 barbara truncato uictrix duce castra fugauit.  
 nuda fides armata deo est; uirtute fidei  
 fortior Ezechias paucis quam milibus ille  
 Sennacherib, cuius Babylon et opima Nineue  
 regnum erat. Assyrias uires et Medica regna  
 170 mouerat et magnis legionibus omnia circum

- regna terens sacram domini tendebat ad urbem  
 atque unam tota bellorum mole petebat.  
 dum parat hoc bellis retinentibus inopia uota  
 inpediente deo, praemisit scripta superbis  
 175 dura minis, quae sumpta dolens altaria coram  
 intulit Ezechias domino, lacrimisque profusis  
 dum recitat fera uerba lauans prostratus et orans  
 atrata cum plebe, deum permouit, et una  
 tam grauis exitii uictor prece perculit absens  
 180 Assyrios pugnante deo, compendia tanta  
 promeritus, ne nosset eum quem uinceret hostem.  
 nam post Ezechiae querulos trans sidera fletus  
 et de corde humili missas super astra querellas  
 uoce pia impulsis summi patris auribus, altae  
 185 ut patuere fores caeli, delabitur ales  
 angelus halantem qua labitur aëra ducens,  
 armatus uerbi gladio ferit inopia castra  
 et sopitorum taciturna strage triumphans  
 centum octoginta dedit uno milia leto,  
 190 et nox una fuit tam magni conscia belli.  
 mane minax rex surgit adhuc, et mox miser armis  
 milite deleta uacuis fugit agmine raro,  
 Ezechiam fugiens alio procul orbe diremptum,  
 cui modo praesenti fuerat sua uincla minatus.  
 195 tunc uelut Ezechiae fuit interuentor Esaias,  
 ad dominum nobis isto sit tempore Felix.  
 iactemus nostras et transfundamus in istum  
 curas atque metus. leuis illi sarcina nostrum  
 pondus erit, quia quod paruis onus hoc leue magnis.  
 200 sic deus ipse hominum gessit peccata nec hausit,  
 et mortem passus non pertulit in cruce culpam.  
 perdidit ille meam repararet ut in cruce uitam;  
 ille reus factus, ne sim reus; inter iniquos  
 condemnatus obit, nos ut discernat iniquis.  
 205 morte pia dominus mihi mortuus, ut sibi uiuam  
 et merear semper uiuentis uiuere uitam.  
 sic potiora eius uenerando in corpore membra  
 martyres, e quibus est insigni robore Felix  
 inter diuini capitis sacra lumina fulgens,  
 210 iure deo ualidi, quia Christo proxima passi.  
 concurramus ad hunc spe conspirante patronum;  
 suscipiet nostras placida pietate querellas,  
 et dum natalem ipsius celebramus ouantes,  
 ille preces nostras meritis pius adseret altis  
 215 inque uicem flebit nobis, quia mente dicata  
 nos laetamur ei. non est cura haec noua sanctis  
 exorare deum pro peccatoribus aegris

- uique boni meriti meritum superare sinistrum.  
 sic legimus Moysen populo peccante precatum  
 220 extinxisse graues aeterni uindictis iras,  
 et cum Pentapolim perfunderet igneus imber,  
 exiguum Segor Sodomis discernit iniquis  
 Lot fugiens castaque potens prece liberat urbem  
 electamque domo sumit, quia sede pudica  
 225 integer incestae permanserat incola terrae,  
 permixtus Sodomae tectis sed moribus exter.  
 quid loquar Eliae precibus clusum atque reclusum  
 caelum et sanctiloquo sublimis in ore prophetae  
 terrarum mansisse famem, rediisse salutem?  
 230 ut quondam hos habuit uetus aetas, sic modo nostra  
 Felicem sortita salus petat omne quod audet  
 quodque cupit tali speret confisa patrono.  
 sancte deo dilecte, dei tu dextera, Felix,  
 esto, precor, nobis tu munitissima turris.  
 235 nam deus Abraham deus est tuus et deus Isac  
 et deus Israel tuus est deus; ille Rubentis  
 diuisor pelagi et dulcator fontis amari,  
 ille dator mannae caelo, dator ortygis austro  
 et sitientis humi percussa rupe rigator,  
 240 ipse tuus deus est, qui per deserta sequentem  
 praecessit populum et praetentam nocte dieque  
 temporis alterna mutauit lege columnam  
 quique quater denos inter deserta per annos,  
 angelico plebem de caelis pane cibauit  
 245 et rupta in fluuios sitientem cote refecit.  
 posce, precor, placidum nostris accedere Christum  
 partibus; ipse tuus deus est, quo fortis Iesus  
 stare suis iussit solem lunamque triumphis,  
 et tibi cum dominus Romani prospera regni  
 250 adnuerit, famulis elementis praecipe, Felix,  
 ad nostrum seruire bonum; procedat et astris  
 stantibus aucta dies; stet sol tibi lunaque concors  
 haereat obfixo suspendens sidera cursu,  
 dum Romana suum capiat uictoria finem.  
 255 sicut in Assyria Daniel Babylone leones  
 effusa domuit uictor prece, sic tibi, Felix,  
 effera barbaries Christo frangente dometur  
 et tua captiui iaceant uestigia circum.  
 sic aliquando ferae circum iacuere prophetam  
 260 orantisque pedes linguis mulsero benignis,  
 naturam mutante deo, ut damnaret acerba  
 mente feros homines humana pace ferarum.  
 sic et crudelem confudit flamma tyrannum  
 sanctis spectantem pueris seruire caminos

- 265 atque suos cantare reos, ardere ministros.  
 quonam se miseri poterunt defendere reges,  
 qui tam degeneres humanae mentis in illos  
 saeuierint, quibus et feritas et flamma pepercit?  
 sed uelut aeternos pueris recinentibus hymnos  
 270 roscidus accensos discussit spiritus ignes,  
 sic nobis placido Felicis gratia flatu  
 adspirante deo bellorum temperet ignes  
 ortaue Romuleis reprimens incendia terris  
 sollicitos placida iam pace refrigeret aestus  
 275 fessaue restinctis absoluat pectora curis.  
 sed cur insipiens, tamquam tibi sim rudis hospes  
 oblitusque tui, ueterum te posco parentum  
 exemplis, ut opem tribuas in rebus egenis,  
 quam tibi dante deo facies tu cedere nobis?  
 280 sat mihi sunt, Felix, uirtutum exempla tuarum,  
 nec tibi pauperior Christus caelestia fundit  
 munera quam patribus, quorum generosa propago es.  
 nam patriarcharum, Felix, et filius aequae  
 stirpis apostolicae es, tanti non degener heres  
 285 seminis; ut sanctae legis simul atque fidei  
 confessor patriis uirtutibus aemula sanctus  
 signa geris, nec, si species operum tibi dispar,  
 non similis uirtus; diuersa est gratia uobis,  
 gloria par, quoniam sanctis fons omnibus unus  
 290 et regnum commune dei; non una prophetis  
 martyribusque sacris opera, ut diuersa fuerunt  
 tempora, nec coeunt signis distantia causis  
 gesta; dei per dona sibi caelestia distant  
 aequales meritis. si non eadem omnia Felix  
 295 quae Daniel gessit uel pertulit et lacus istum  
 non habuit nec terribiles cinxere leones:  
 nec Daniel eadem pro nomine passus erili est,  
 uerbera uincla metus et noctem carceris atri,  
 quae Felix horrenda tulit. qui rostra ferarum  
 300 clausit adoranti faciens mansueta prophetae,  
 qui fecit gelidos pueris orantibus ignes  
 umidaue in mediis dedit indumenta caminis,  
 ipse dedit celso Felicem iure potentem  
 pestiferis Satanae legionibus inperitare,  
 305 in quibus iste feras omnes conpescit et ignes.  
 nam quae non serpens, quae non hac belua turba est?  
 denique de multis unum loquar, ut sit ab uno  
 discere daemoniis sensus constare ferinos.  
 quidam homo, non longum tempus, tam prodigiali  
 310 daemone distentus fuit, ut iam non modo notos  
 ille cibos hominum, uel si congesta daretur



- multa mensa dape, in facili consumeret haustu,  
 uerum et gallinas habitantum limine raptas,  
 mox ut sustulerat, rabido discerperet ore  
 315 et pluma incoctas non suffocante uoraret.  
 quin et funeream saniem sitiebat et ossa  
 lambebat, pecudum proiecta cadauera mandens,  
 obscenus conuiuia canum. hic modo daemone tanto  
 sobrius ecce procul conductum exercet agellum  
 320 et curante deo sancta Felicis in aula  
 redditus ipse sibi claro satis indice monstrat  
 Felicem meritis et Christi nomine fortem  
 inmanes domitare feras et uincere flammās.  
 dicite qui testes operum Felicis adestis,  
 325 nonne feras ignesque domat, cum daemonas urget,  
 qui uitis animas et morbis corpora frangunt,  
 qui desideriis hominem flammantibus urunt  
 peccatisque uorant? istos cruciansque fugansque  
 nonne feras ignesque domat? fremit igneus ultor  
 330 agminis igniferi Felix flammamque nocentem  
 opprimit igne dei; tenebrarum uincitur ignis  
 luminis igne pio; daemon fugit, et deus intrat;  
 et fit homo bene uersa domus, felicius aula,  
 possessore deo taetrum infitiata colonum.  
 335 candidus et medicans ignis dens; hoc meus igne  
 feruet, ut incensum restinguat daemona, Felix  
 laxatumque hominem flagrante refrigeret hoste.  
 mira manus et uirga potens et celsa potestas  
 intra unum mixtis inimico foedere corpus  
 340 spiritibus Felix interuenit inter operata  
 pectoris et tenues dirimit subtilior auras,  
 daemone discernens animam, quo libera pulso  
 mens hominem recipit. par hoc operi est opus illi,  
 quo merram tristem sacri dulcedine ligni  
 345 in populi potus crucis inmutauit imago.  
 sic Felix pietate potens, quia nobilis altae  
 confessor crucis est, ipsum quasi tristitia merrae  
 pocula hominem mutat. qui nunc inflatus acerbo  
 daemone uipereum per spumea labra saporem,  
 350 concussu laterum et singultu gutturis ampli  
 saepius adsiliens flatus ructabat amaros,  
 iam totus uel solus homo in sua iura reuersus  
 dulce sapit, sanum spirat placidumque profatur.  
 ergo et Felicem uirtutis dextera cingit.  
 355 inde potens uarias tenebrosi principis artes  
 deuorat ut magicos Moseia uirga dracones.  
 cernimus ecce pares domini caelestis adesse  
 ad meritum Felicis opes, operum quoque formas

- congruere et quaecumque patres in corpore sancti  
 360 ediderint documenta dei sine corpore uiuum  
 in Christo Felicem agere insignique potentem  
 mente animam, positi dum corporis ossa quiescunt,  
 ante diem reditus clavis praetendere signis,  
 qualem pro meritis sit gestatura coronam,  
 365 cum steterit toto rediuius corpore Felix.  
 omnes quisque suo radiabunt lumine sancti  
 dissimili fulgore pares nec iudice Christo  
 alter in alterius meriti dispendia crescent;  
 Christus erit cunctis regnum lux uita corona.  
 370 cernite distinctos actu sed honore iugatos  
 testamentorum ueterisque nouique magistros,  
 in quibus una dedit geminas sapientia leges.  
 atque ita uirtutes uarias par gloria pensat.  
 non Petrus inrupit uirga mare, sed neque Moyses  
 375 aequoris incessit liquido; tamen unus utrique  
 fulget honos, unus quoniam fuit auctor utrique  
 scindere aquas uirga, pedibus calcare fluentia,  
 qui deus est ueterum in sanctis, deus ipse nouorum;  
 quo data lex domino est, ex ipso gratia uenit;  
 380 ille deus Danielis et ille trium puerorum  
 Felicis deus ipse deus nec se minor ipse est.  
 in sancto Felice deus, per quem bona dona  
 et medicas exercet opes terraque marique.  
 omni namque die testes sumus undique crebris  
 385 coetibus aut sanos gratantia reddere uota  
 aut aegros uarias petere ac sentire medellas.  
 cernimus et multos peregrino a litore uectos  
 ante sacram sancti prostratos martyris aulam,  
 dum referunt grates, tolerata referre pericla,  
 390 testantes ualidis conlisa naue procellis  
 se raptos miserante deo Felicis et ipsa  
 educente manu maris emersisse profundo  
 et desperatam placidos cepisse salutem,  
 Felicis meritis et aquas et cedere flammis.  
 395 praeterita ut taceam meriti documenta potentis,  
 nouimus experti, pauor e terrore recenti  
 uibrat adhuc memores animos, recolentibus illa  
 quae tulimus paene absumptis incendia tectis;  
 quamlibet extinctae recalent uestigia flammae  
 400 mentibus et magni cumulant Felicis amorem,  
 quem prope corporeo praesentem uidimus actu  
 obiectare manus flammis et nostra tueri  
 limina iuncta suis, quae tamquam territa sancti  
 obstantis facie prope tangens flamma pauebat  
 405 pulsaque de nostri rapiendo culmine tecti,

- comminus in tuguri uicina strage perarsit.  
mira loquar, stetit inmotus sine flatibus aether  
nec nemorum foliis ullum dedit aura tremorem,  
ne posset rapidus procedere longius ignis  
410 per contexta uolans sociarum tigna domorum,  
sed uentis deserta cadentibus ire negaret  
flamma et consumpto moreretur languida pastu.  
    consimili modo nos, Felix, ope solue periclis,  
nec domibus nostris propient mala, pulsaque per te  
415 horrida sanguineo longe sonet ira flagello.  
illam etiam uirtutem arcendis induc bellis,  
qua male labentem uicinis montibus amnem,  
qui subitis aucto pluuiis torrente redundans,  
sic tua praecipitans in limina saepe ruebat,  
420 ut tectis coniuncta tuis habitacula uastis  
quassaret uiolentus aquis, ita flumine uerso  
fecisti mutare uias, ut nunc nouus illum  
alueus insolita ducat regione furentem  
nostraque longinquo uitantem tecta meatu:  
425 sic modo bellisono uenientes flumine pugnas  
de nostris auerte locis. manus in pia sacris  
finibus absistat, quibus est tua gratia uallum,  
atque tuam timeant hostes quasi daemones aulam,  
nec cruor haec uiolet quae flamma uel unda refugit.

# 'DEUS AGRICOLAM CONFIRMAT'. L'ÉLABORATION DE LA PARABOLE DU SEMEUR DANS LES LIVRES CONTRE SYMMAQUE DE PRUDENCE\*

G. Partoens

## 1. Introduction

Célèbre est le débat concernant l'*ara Victoriae* qui eut lieu en 384.<sup>1</sup> Les antagonistes de cette affaire furent Symmaque, orateur renommé et membre éminent de l'aristocratie païenne, et Ambroise, évêque de Milan. Dix-huit ans après cette querelle, le poète Prudence reprit leur discussion dans son deuxième *Livre contre Symmaque*, oeuvre visant à réfuter les arguments les plus fondamentaux du sénateur païen.<sup>2</sup> Quoique ce deuxième livre contienne des paraphrases poétiques de la

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\* Nous aimerions remercier les personnes qui ont contribué à cet article. Nous remercions plus particulièrement le Prof. Dr. W. Evenepoel de ses bons conseils, ainsi que la famille Debroe-Blanche de sa traduction.

<sup>1</sup> Pour de la littérature récente sur la signification de cette affaire, voir A. Dihle, "Zum Streit um den Altar der Viktoria", *Romanitas et Christianitas. Studia Iano Henrico Waszink oblata*, éd. W. Den Boer-P.G. Van der Nat (Amsterdam-London, 1973), pp. 81-97; K. Rosen, "Fides contra dissimulationem. Ambrosius und Symmachus im Kampf um den Victoriaaltar", *JbAC* 37 (1994), pp. 29-36; M. Fuhrmann, *Rom in der Spätantike. Porträt einer Epoche* (Darmstadt, 1994), pp. 59-80, 397. Pour un commentaire historique sur la *relatio* de Symmaque de 384, voir D. Vera, *Commento storico alle Relazioni di Quinto Aurelio Simmaco* (Pisa, 1981), pp. 12-53. La *relatio* de Symmaque et les lettres 17, 18 et 57 d'Ambroise furent éditées, traduites et pourvues d'une introduction et d'un commentaire dans R. Klein, *Der Streit um den Victoriaaltar. Die dritte Relatio des Symmachus und die Briefe 17, 18 und 57 des Mailänder Bischofs Ambrosius* (Texte zur Forschung, 7; Darmstadt, 1972); J. Wytzes, *Der letzte Kampf des Heidentums in Rom* (*Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain*, 56; Leiden, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> Pour des textes initiant le lecteur dans les *Livres contre Symmaque* et fournissant de plus amples informations bibliographiques, voir W. Steidle, "Die dichterische Konzeption des Prudentius und das Gedicht Contra Symmachum", *Vigiliae Christianae* 25 (1971), pp. 241-281; S. Döpp, 2.4.32, "Prudentius' Gedicht gegen Symmachus. Anlass und Struktur", *JbAC* 23 (1980), pp. 65-81; S. Döpp, "Prudentius' Contra Symmachum eine Einheit?", *Vigiliae Christianae* 40 (1986), pp. 66-82; A. Baldini, "Il *Contra Symmachum* di Prudenzio e la conversione del senato", *RSA* 17-18 (1987-1988), pp. 115-157; M. Kah, 'Die Welt der Römer mit der Seele suchend ...' *Die Religiosität des Prudentius im Spannungsfeld zwischen 'pietas christiana' und 'pietas Romana'* (*Hereditas: Studien zur alten Kirchengeschichte*, 3; Bonn, 1990), *passim*; Ch. Gnülka, "Prudentius über die Statue der Viktoria im Senat", *FMS* 25 (1991), pp. 40-4; L. Rivero García, *La poesía de Prudencio* (Cáceres, 1996), pp. 102-28.

dix-huitième lettre d'Ambroise contre Symmaque datant de 384, il faut néanmoins reconnaître une grande indépendance de Prudence vis-à-vis de cette lettre. Notre intention est d'illustrer cette position indépendante à l'aide d'un des rares extraits de cette oeuvre apologétique où Prudence se réfère à la Bible. Il s'agit de son élaboration de la parabole du semeur dans les vers 1020-1063 du livre.<sup>3</sup>

En utilisant un argument antichrétien populaire, Symmaque, dans sa troisième *relatio*, avait réduit la grande famine de 383 aux mesures antipaiennes de l'empereur Gratien de 382.<sup>4</sup> Outre l'enlèvement de l'*ara Victoriae* de la curie romaine, ces mesures englobaient également l'arrêt des subsides de l'Etat aux cultes païens de la Ville et à leurs collèges sacerdotaux. De plus, ceux-ci furent empêchés d'acquérir des terres par le biais d'héritages. En réponse à l'argument de Symmaque, Ambroise inséra dans sa dix-huitième lettre une réfutation rationalisante (*Ep.* 18, 17-21)<sup>5</sup> précédée d'une confrontation développée des vierges et des prêtres chrétiens d'une part, et des vierges et prêtres païens d'autre part (*Ep.* 18, 11-16).<sup>6</sup> Vers la fin des *Livres contre*

<sup>3</sup> Outre les deux préfaces, ce passage est le plus important des *Livres contre Symmaque* à être inspiré par la Bible. Pour la présence de la Bible dans l'oeuvre de Prudence, voir J.L. Charlet, "Prudence et la Bible", *RecAug* 18 (1983), pp. 3-149.

<sup>4</sup> Voir *Rel.* 3, 15-16. Pour cette famine, voir Vera, *Commento storico*, pp. 49-50. Le lien causal entre des catastrophes naturelles et des cas de *religio neglecta* revient traditionnellement dans la littérature classique et constituait un argument antichrétien important. Voir également Tert., *Apol.* 40-41; Cypr., *Demet.* 2; Arn. 1, 3; 3, 11; 4, 24; Symm., *Ep.* 2, 6, 2; 7, 3; P. Courcelle, "Anti-Christian Arguments and Christian Platonism: from Arnobius to St. Ambrose", *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, éd. A. Momigliano (Oxford, 1963), pp. 151-152, 166-168; W. Speyer, "Religiös-sittliches und frevelhaftes Verhalten in seiner Auswirkung auf die Naturgewalten. Zur Kontinuität einer volkstümlichen Vorstellung in Antike und Christentum", *JbAC* 22 (1979), pp. 30-39; E. Heck, *MH ΘΕΟΜΑΧΕΙΝ oder: Die Bestrafung des Gottesverächters (Studien zur klassischen Philologie, 24; Frankfurt am Main-Bern-New York, 1987)*, *passim*; H.P. Kohns, "Hungersnot", *RAC* 16 (Stuttgart, 1994), cc. 884-890.

<sup>5</sup> Ambroise y traite des famines précédant l'avènement du christianisme et les mesures de Gratien, de même que des récoltes abondantes dans certaines provinces en 383 et la récolte réussie de 384 (pour ce mode de réfutation, voir Tert., *Apol.* 40, 3ss; Arn. 1, 3; 4, 24).

<sup>6</sup> A plusieurs reprises, nous retrouvons une attaque contre les vierges et les prêtres païens dans la littérature paléochrétienne. Les prédécesseurs les plus importants du texte de Prudence sont Athan., *Sur la virginité*, pp. 65-67 (cette lettre conservée fut éditée et traduite par L.-Th. Lefort, *Saint Athanase: Sur la virginité, Le Muséon* 42 (1929), pp. 197-264); Ambr., *Virginib.* 1, 15 (CSLP); *Virgin.* 13 (CSLP); Arn. 4, 35 (CSEL 4). Voir aussi R. Schilling, "Vestales et vierges chrétiennes dans la Rome antique", *Revue des sciences religieuses* 35 (1961), pp. 113-129; C. Leveleux., *Des prêtresses déçues: l'image des Vestales chez les Pères de l'Église latine (fin IIe-début Ve s.) (Travaux et recherches Pantheon-Assas (Paris II). Droit-économie-sciences sociales; Paris, 1995).*

*Symmaque*, Prudence s'est laissé inspirer par cette réponse d'Ambroise, d'abord par sa réfutation rationalisante du lien causal entre les événements de 382 et ceux de 383, ensuite par sa confrontation des religieuses chrétiennes et païennes. Ici, la réfutation (v. 917-1054) précède la confrontation (v. 1055-1113) et les deux parties sont habilement reliées par les vers ci-traités (v. 1020-1063).

La réfutation prudentienne de l'argument antichrétien de *Symmaque* peut être subdivisée en trois parties: (a) constatation empirique de l'approvisionnement en blé à Rome se déroulant à partir des plus importants greniers de la Ville (v. 917-954); (b) réfutation rationalisante de l'argument que des mesures antipaïennes auraient eu pour conséquence de mauvaises récoltes (v. 955-1000)<sup>7</sup>; (c) programme d'une vie chrétienne à la campagne (v. 1001-1054). Cette troisième partie est introduite par la question ironique de savoir s'il n'eut pas été plus juste que les dieux aient frappé uniquement les champs des agriculteurs chrétiens (v. 1001-1004).<sup>8</sup> Cependant, constate Prudence, les chrétiens disposent également d'une récolte satisfaisante (v. 1005-1006a). Même les attaques chrétiennes contre les sanctuaires de campagne païens n'ont pas eu de conséquences néfastes pour la récolte (v. 1006b-1014). D'ailleurs, les chrétiens qui espèrent la vie éternelle, n'ont pas besoin de récolte abondante (v. 1015-1019).<sup>9</sup> Aux vers 1001-1019, deux éléments annoncent le thème des vers 1020-1054: d'abord la mention du travail manuel (*ratione colendi / exercere manum non paenitet*, v. 1005b-1006a); puis la relativisation de la *spes* traditionnellement associée à l'*agricola* et ce du point de vue de la *spes* chrétienne (v. 1015-1019).<sup>10</sup> Ainsi Prudence crée un programme de vie chrétienne à la campagne, reflété dans le jeu de mots *christicolum ... agelli* en 1003. Ce programme deviendra la pensée dominante dans les vers suivants, où Prudence clôture en climax sa réfutation de *Symmaque* par l'élaboration de la parabole évangélique du semeur (Matth. 13, 1-23; Mc. 4, 1-20; Lc. 8, 4-15). Ces vers fonctionnent également comme transition vers la confrontation des

<sup>7</sup> Cf. v. 955 sq. *Sit fortasse aliquis paulo infecundior annus, / nil mirum nec in orbe novum* etc.

<sup>8</sup> Comparer 1003 avec Tert., *Apol.* 41, 1; Arn. 1, 19; Ambr., *Ep.* 18, 18.

<sup>9</sup> Comparer avec Tertullien *Apol.* 41, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Voir Ambr., *Ep.* 18, 17 (*spem rusticae plebis*); *LCS* (= Libri contra Symmachum) 2, 963-964 (*Inrita vota / agricolae*). Pour l'*agricola* comme illustration de la *spes*, voir aussi Ménandre fr. 641 Kock (vol. III, p. 190); Tib. 2, 6, 21-22; *Anth. Lat.* 415, 51-56.

vierges chrétiennes et païennes (v. 1055-1113). Les vers 1020-1054 peuvent, comme nous verrons, être lus en fonction de cette transition.

## 2. *Texte et traduction*<sup>11</sup>

1020 O felix nimium, sapiens et rusticus idem,  
Qui terras animumque colens inpendit utrisque  
Curam pervigilem, quales, quos inbuit auctor  
Christus et adsumptis dedit haec praecepta colonis:

1025 ‘Semina cum sulcis committitis, arva cavete  
Dura lapillorum macie, ne decadat illic,  
Quod seritur, primo quoniam praefertile germen  
Luxuriat, suco mox deficiente sub aestu  
Sideris igniferi sitiens torretur et aret,  
Neue in spinosos incurrant semina vepres,  
1030 Aspera nam segetem surgentem vincula texunt  
Ac fragiles calamos nodis rubus artat acutis,  
Et ne iacta viae spargantur in aggere grana,  
Haec avibus quia nuda patent passimque vorantur  
inmundisque iacent foeda ad ludibria corvis’.

1035 His Deus agricolam confirmat legibus; ille  
Ius caeleste Patris non summa intellegit aure,  
Sed simul et cordis segetem disponit et agri,  
Ne minus interno niteant praecordia cultu,  
Quam cum laeta suas ostentant iugera messes.

1040 Extirpamus enim sentos de pectore vepres,  
Ne vitiosa necent germen vitale flagella,  
Ne frugem segetemque animae spinosa malorum  
Impediat sentix scelerum peccamine crebro,  
Glarea ne tenuis ieiunis siccet harenis

1045 Marcentem sub corde fidem, ne pectoris aestus  
Flagret et effetis urat charismata venis,  
Denique ne iecoris detrita in parte relinquat  
Vilis cura Deum, ne spem, qua vescimur intus,  
Deserat obscenisque avibus permittat edendam

<sup>11</sup> Comme édition nous avons utilisé celle de J. Bergman (*Aurelii Prudentii Clementis carmina*. Recensuit et prolegomenis, commentario critico, indicibus instruxit J. Bergman (CSEL 61; Vindobonae-Lipsiae, 1926), pp. 284-285). La traduction française est presque entièrement basée sur celle de M. Lavarenne (Prudence. Tome 3. *Psychomachie. Contre Symmaque*. Texte établi et traduit par M. Lavarenne (CUF; Paris 1963<sup>2</sup>), pp. 192-194).

- 1050 Et proiecta fides hosti sit praeda volucris.  
 Talis nostrorum sollertia centiplicatos  
 Agrorum rediget fructus, quibus acrius instat,  
 Nec metuit, ne congestum populetur acervum  
 Curculio vel nigra cavis formica recondat.
- 1055 Sunt et virginibus pulcherrima praemia nostris:  
 Et pudor et sancto tectus velamine vultus  
 Et privatus honos nec nota et publica forma  
 Et rarae tenuesque epulae et mens sobria semper  
 Lexque pudicitiae vitae cum fine peracta.
- 1060 Hinc decies deni rediguntur in horrea fructus,  
 Horrea nocturno non umquam obnoxia furi,  
 Nam caelum fur nullus adit, caelestia numquam  
 Fraude resignantur; fraus terris volvitur imis.

Ô trop heureux l'homme qui vit à la fois en sage et en paysan, qui cultive ses terres et son âme, qui consacre aux unes et à l'autre un soin vigilant, comme ceux que le Christ a imprégnés de sa parole, qu'il a pris pour ses métayers en leur donnant ces préceptes:

'Quand vous confiez les graines aux sillons, prenez garde aux champs que durcit l'aridité des pierres; n'y laissez pas tomber la semence, parce que, si d'abord l'embryon merveilleusement fertile pousse avec exubérance, bientôt la sève vient à manquer sous la chaleur torride de l'astre enflammé; le voilà altéré, grillé, desséché. Que les graines n'aillent pas non plus tomber dans les buissons épineux, car leurs liens rugueux entrelacent le blé qui lève, et la ronce étouffe de ses noeuds piquants les tiges fragiles. En jetant les grains, ne les répandez pas sur la chaussée de la route, parce qu'ils sont exposés, à découvert, aux oiseaux, sont dévorés de tous côtés, et gisent à l'abandon, honteusement livrés au bon plaisir des corbeaux immondes.'

Tels sont les préceptes par lesquels Dieu encourage l'agriculteur. Celui-ci ne prête pas à la loi céleste du Père une oreille distraite, mais il prépare la moisson de son âme en même temps que celle de son champ, de crainte que son coeur cultivé par une culture intérieure ne resplendisse moins que ses riches arpens étalant leurs moissons.

Oui, nous extirpons de notre coeur les buissons épineux, pour que les branches mauvaises ne tuent pas le germe de vie, pour que la ronce piquante du mal n'empêche pas, par la fréquence des péchés criminels, la production, la moisson de l'âme; pour qu'un gravier pauvre ne dessèche pas dans son sable aride la foi qui se flétrirait dans le coeur; pour que l'ardeur des passions ne s'enflamme pas et ne brûle pas dans les veines épuisées les dons de la grâce; enfin, pour qu'une basse négligence ne laisse pas Dieu dans un coin du coeur trop foulé par les pas des soucis, de peur que cette négligence n'abandonne l'Espérance, qui est notre nourriture intérieure, ne l'offre en pâture aux oiseaux sinistres, et



que la Foi délaissée ne devienne la proie de l'ennemi ailé. Telle est l'habileté qui fera fructifier nos champs au centuple; elle s'y applique avec ardeur, sans craindre que les tas de grain ne soient ravagés par le charançon, ni que la noire fourmi ne les emporte dans ses trous.

Nos vierges, elles aussi, possèdent de magnifiques mérites: leur pudeur, leur visage couvert d'un saint voile, l'honneur privé, leur beauté qui ne s'affiche pas en public, leurs repas rares et frugaux, leur esprit toujours sobre, leur règle de chasteté qui ne prend fin qu'avec leur vie. Voilà ce qui fait rentrer des moissons centuplées dans leurs greniers: et ces greniers ne sont jamais exposés aux voleurs nocturnes: car aucun voleur n'entre au ciel, le sceau des choses célestes n'est jamais rompu par la fraude: c'est sur la terre en bas que la fraude rampe.

### 3. Contexte et structure

Dans l'évangile, la parabole du semeur (Matth. 13, 3-9) est suivie d'une interprétation émise par le Christ en personne (Matth. 13, 18-23).<sup>12</sup> La parabole est précédée d'une description de la situation où le Christ la prononça en public (Matth. 13, 1-3). L'interprétation est à son tour précédée d'une réflexion sur la nature des paraboles (Matth. 13, 10-17). Une structure similaire se manifeste chez Prudence: sa version de la parabole (v. 1024-1034) est suivie d'une interprétation (v. 1040-1054). Tout comme dans l'évangile, les vers précédant la parabole (v. 1020-1023) traitent du Christ et de son auditoire, qui, cette fois-ci, ne se compose pas d'une masse peu définie, mais bien de *coloni*. Les vers 1035-1039 précédant l'interprétation parlent du *colonus* qui a compris les paroles du Christ. Même si Prudence ne s'attarde pas davantage sur la nature des paraboles, les mots *non summa ... aure* (v. 1036) font référence à Matth. 13, 9-17.<sup>13</sup> Les vers

<sup>12</sup> Il est probable que dans sa paraphrase, Prudence vise en même temps les versions de Matth., Mc. et Lc. Seul dans les versions fort similaires de Matth. et Mc., nous trouvons, tout comme chez Prudence, une description de l'activité brûlante du soleil. D'autre part, le mot *detrita* (v. 1047) ne renvoie qu'à la version de Lc. (8, 4-15). Par ailleurs, Prudence ne respecte pas l'ordre présent dans les textes évangéliques. Ceci pourrait suggérer que Prudence cite de mémoire. Voir Charlet, "Prudence et la Bible", pp. 63-64. Dans ce qui suit, nous adopterons Matth. 13, 1-23 comme point de référence.

<sup>13</sup> Matth. 13, 10-17 est une réflexion à partir de *Audite audientes et nolite intellegere et videte visionem et nolite cognoscere* (Is. 6, 9), et est anticipée par Matth. 13, 9: *Qui habet aures audiendi, audiat*. A partir d'entre autres Matth. 13, 9, les auteurs chrétiens ont développé l'image des *aures mentis*. Voir la paraphrase que donne Iuvencus de ce vers évangélique: *Audiat haec, aures mentis qui gestat apertas* (2, 754; CSEL 24). Comparer Hier., *Comm. in Es.* 14, 50, 4-7 (CCSL 73, pars 1, 2a); Paul.-Nol., *Carm.* 31, 227

précédant la parabole et son interprétation (v. 1020-1023 et 1035-1039) ont un contenu fort analogue, ce qui n'est pas le cas dans l'évangile, et encadrent la parabole d'une référence à une vie faite de la combinaison d'agriculture et de foi chrétienne (*Qui, terras animumque colens, inpendit utrisque / curam pervigilem*, v. 1021; *Sed simul et cordis segetem disponit et agri*, v. 1037). Prudence considère donc la parabole du semeur comme base biblique d'une version chrétienne du *sapiens rusticus* classique.<sup>14</sup> Afin que la parabole devienne le fondement de ce double projet déjà mis en cause avant 1020, Prudence la déforme en une série de conseils pour les semailles (*praecepta*, v. 1023) adressés par un maître (*auctor / Christus*, v. 1022-1023)<sup>15</sup> à un public cible d'*agricolae* semeurs. Ainsi, Prudence établit un glissement vis-à-vis de la version évangélique de la parabole: le public cible lui-même devient le semeur, tandis que l'interprétation du Christ dans l'évangile démontre clairement que les terres, et non le semeur, devaient être assimilées au public cible. Pour le lecteur chrétien, il est cependant fort clair qu'il s'agit ici d'une paraphrase d'une parabole biblique. De plus, divers éléments dans les vers 1020-1039 accentuent que, outre une

(CSEL 30); Aug., *Conf.* 1, 5, 5; 4, 15, 27 (CCSL 27); *Serm.* 17, 1 (CCSL 41). Pour l'image des *ares mentis*, voir E. Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern-München, 1967<sup>61</sup>), pp. 146-147. Prudence ne fait qu'une petite allusion au contenu de Matth. 13, 10-17: *ille / Ius caeleste Patris non summa intellegit aures* (v. 1035-1036). L'expression *summa ... aures* apparaît chez Virgile et Stace, où elle signifie la pointe de l'oreille (voir *Aen.* 9, 417; *Theb.* 11, 252). Iuvencus emploie la même expression avec le même sens que Prudence et dans le même contexte biblique: *Quisque meum verbum summas dimittit in aures, / Nec sensus recepit stabili praecepta vigore, / Eripit illius totum de pectore daemon* (2, 776-778). Pour l'éventuelle influence de Iuvencus sur Prudence, voir Charlet, "Prudence et la Bible", pp. 117ss.

<sup>14</sup> Les vers qui précèdent 1020 contiennent déjà une allusion au thème du bonheur du paysan philosophe. Celui-ci se contente du strict nécessaire. Avec le vers 1020, ils nous font penser au traitement horatien du même thème dans *Sat.* 2, 2, 1ss: *Quae virtus et quanta, boni, sit vivere parvo / (nec meus hic sermo est, sed quae praecepti Ofellus / rusticus, abnormis sapiens crassaque Minerva), / discite ...* Prudence renforce cette réminiscence horatienne à l'aide de deux emprunts à Virgile. Dans *Georg.* 2, nous lisons: *O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint, / agricolas ...* (458-459). Ces mots y introduisent un éloge de la simplicité de la vie à la campagne et témoignent par conséquent du bonheur du *sapiens rusticus*. Plus loin, nous lisons dans le même passage: *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas* (490). Chez Prudence, le philosophe heureux de Virgile est remplacé par le *colonus* qui se sait instruit par Dieu lui-même (*auctor / Christus*, 1022-1023). Pour ces emprunts horatiens et virgiliens, voir J. Fontaine, "Valeurs antiques et valeurs chrétiennes dans la spiritualité des grands propriétaires terriens à la fin du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle occidental", *Epektasis. Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal J. Daniélou*, éd. J. Fontaine-Ch. Kannengiesser (Paris, 1972), p. 591.

<sup>15</sup> *Auctor* ne renvoie pas au Christ comme Créateur, mais bien à son rôle de *praeceptor*. Les mots *auctor inbuat* évoquent l'expression fréquente *auctor et magister*, pour indiquer un maître exemplaire.

attention pour l'activité productive du labeur quotidien sur les champs, Prudence a surtout en vue une signification spirituelle des conseils du Christ.<sup>16</sup> Ainsi, la parabole fonctionne comme base biblique d'une lecture symbolique de ce travail quotidien.

Dans sa version de la parabole (v. 1024-1034), Prudence s'est déjà fait guider par l'interprétation parénétique qu'il en fera dans les vers 1040-1054. Au lieu d'un récit conté par le Christ (Matth. 13, 3-9), nous retrouvons ici une série de *praecepta* (v. 1023) qui conseillent uniquement de ne pas semer sur des terres incultes. De la sorte, nous obtenons, au lieu de la structure quadruple dans l'évangile, une triple structure négative,<sup>17</sup> qui prépare l'interprétation selon laquelle le fruit de la terre fertile n'est que le résultat (v. 1051-1054) d'une lutte contre une triple menace (v. 1040-1050). Par le biais de cette transition vers une triple structure, Prudence adapte sa parabole au thème de la lutte intérieure que doit mener tout chrétien contre sa propre nature peccable.

A partir de son interprétation de la parabole (v. 1040-1054), Prudence s'éloigne de la perspective étroite des vers 1020-1039. Dès

<sup>16</sup> Plusieurs éléments dans les vers 1020-1039 démontrent que les conseils du Christ doivent être interprétés dans un sens symbolique et spirituelle: la combinaison de l'*animi* et de la *terrae cultura* (v. 1021; 1037); des mots à résonance biblique comme *adsumere* (v. 1023) et *confirmare* (v. 1035); les mots *ius caeleste Patris* (v. 1036), qui font du Christ le médiateur entre Dieu et l'homme (comparer Hier., *Comm. in Matth.* 2, 13, 3; CCSL 77); la présence dans les vers 1030-1031 de l'image des *vincula* et des *nodi voluptatum*, et de celle des *corvi* dans les vers 1032-1034 (les *corvi*, absents dans les versions évangéliques de la parabole, étaient identifiés aux démons. Voir *Per.* 5, 436; *Tit.* 11; 192. Pour cette identification chez les auteurs chrétiens et son origine biblique, voir F. Sühling, *Die Taube als religiöses Symbol im christlichen Altertum* (Freiburg, 1930) pp. 19-21, 92-93, 106-109, 138, 189, 218).

<sup>17</sup> Par cette structure triplement négative, les vers de Prudence deviennent un petit catalogue de menaces pour les récoltes, comme il y en a deux chez Ovide (*Fast.* 1, 681ss; *Met.* 5, 477ss). Quelques indices suggèrent que Prudence a écrit ces vers en faisant référence à Virgile et à Ovide: *semina ... sulcis committitis* (v. 1024) peut renvoyer à l'expression *sulcis committas semina*, utilisée par Virgile dans une série de conseils pour les semences (*Georg.* 1, 223); les mots *arva cavete* sont une imitation probable de *rura cavete* chez Ovide dans le catalogue de menaces pour les récoltes mentionné ci-dessus (*Fast.* 1, 683) et dont Prudence avait déjà imité quelques vers dans 2, 976-978 (*Fast.* 1, 687-692). Dans le même catalogue ovidien se trouve également la phrase suivante: *Et neque deficiat [seges] macie neque pinguior aequo / Divitiis pereat luxuriosa suis* (*Fast.* 1, 689-690). Les vers prudentiens suivant l'expression *arva cavete* contiennent une possible imitation de cette phrase: *Dura lapillorum macie, ne decidat illic, / Quod seritur, primo quoniam praefertile germen / Luxuriat, suco mox deficiente sub aestu / Sideris igniferi sitiens torretur et aret* (1025-1028). En outre, les mots *fragiles calamos* (v. 1031) et *viae ... in aggere* (v. 1032) sont des emprunts possibles à Virgile *Georg.* 1, 76 et *Aen.* 5, 273.

maintenant, le public cible n'est plus limité aux seuls *coloni* au sens littéral. Dorénavant Prudence parle de l'agriculture spirituelle comme lutte intérieure menée par tous les chrétiens (*extirpamus*, v. 1040; *spem, qua vescimur intus*, v. 1048; *nostrorum ... agrorum*, v. 1051-1052). De plus, il semble qu'à partir de 1040, le public cible n'est plus identifié au semeur. Là où dans la version prudentienne de la parabole, le *colonus* est en même temps semeur et cultivateur, dans son interprétation il n'est que le cultivateur d'une terre où Dieu sèmera. En effet, c'est la tâche du *sapiens* de protéger par l'agriculture spirituelle le *germen vitale*, les *frux segesque animae*, la *fides* et la *spes* contre la propre nature peccable. Ceux-ci sont résumés par le terme *charismata*, un mot typiquement chrétien qui accentue le fait qu'on dispose des semences grâce à un don divin.<sup>18</sup> Ainsi, une certaine scission est à constater entre la parabole (v. 1024-1034) et son interprétation (v. 1040-1054).

Si nous comparons l'interprétation prudentienne (v. 1040-1054) avec celle du Christ (Matth. 13, 18-23), nous distinguerons quelques petites différences. Notre poète reprend l'essentiel de l'interprétation du Christ: l'homme est une terre où Dieu répand le semis de sa Parole. La signification des oiseaux ne change pas non plus d'une interprétation à l'autre: tant Prudence que le Christ les considèrent comme symboles du diable (v. 1047-1050; Matth. 13, 19).<sup>19</sup> A la fin de la série des menaces, notre poète remplace les formes plurielles *avibus*, *corvis* (v. 1033-1034), *avibus* (v. 1048) par le singulier *hosti volucris* (v. 1050). Il se peut qu'outre un renvoi au diable (comparer le singulier dans Matth. 13, 19), il s'agisse ici également d'un renvoi à la déesse Victoria, que Prudence même caractérise au début du deuxième livre comme 'puella pinnigera' (2, 33) ou femme oiseau de mauvais augure. Il s'y offusque à plusieurs reprises de ce qu'elle soit représentée comme un être ailé.<sup>20</sup> Les *spinae*, symboles évangéliques des soucis du monde et des tentations de richesse (Matth. 13, 22), sont devenues symboles de la dépravation humaine en général, conformément à l'utilisation fréquente de l'image des *spinae* par Pru-

<sup>18</sup> Voir ThLL, 3, c. 995, r. 76-c. 996, r. 36.

<sup>19</sup> Prudence pourvoit les *aves* de l'épithète *obscenae* (v. 1049) et obtient ainsi une expression courante pour des oiseaux de mauvais augure. Voir Verg., *Aen.* 3, 241; 262; Ovid., *Am.* 2, 6, 51-52; Sen., *Med.* 731-732; Gell. 13, 14, 6. Pour une explication étymologique de l'adjectif *obscenus* basée sur cette connotation sinistre, voir Varr., *Ling. Lat.* 7, 97.

<sup>20</sup> Voir 2, 28-9; 33; 59-60; Gnllka, "Prudentius über die Statue der Viktoria", pp. 29ss.

dence et d'autres.<sup>21</sup> Ce qui frappe, c'est cependant la déformation de l'interprétation évangélique du semis éparpillé entre les cailloux. Ici aussi, il est possible de noter une scission entre la parabole de Prudence et le sens qu'il y attribue. Là où notre poète suit fidèlement la Bible dans sa version de la parabole (v. 1024-1028), dans son interprétation, par contre, il délaisse l'interprétation évangélique du sol pierreux comme une terre où ne peut exister qu'une foi superficielle qui perd courage dès la première persécution symbolisée par la chaleur du soleil (Matth. 13, 20-21). Ainsi le soleil torride ne symbolise plus une épreuve extérieure, que le chrétien ne maîtrise pas et dont il n'est donc pas coupable, mais bien la volupté qu'il doit maîtriser.<sup>22</sup> Ce glissement d'une menace extérieure vers une menace intérieure dans l'interprétation du soleil revient également à d'autres endroits dans la littérature paléochrétienne. Nous pensons par exemple aux mots suivants de Pseudo-Ambroise adressés à une vierge apostate:

Seminavi secus viam, seminavi in spinis, seminavi in petrosa; aut enim ex corde tuo verba mea volucres, id est, daemones rapuerunt, aut malis tuis cogitationibus suffocata sunt, aut aruerunt nimio aestu libidinis.<sup>23</sup>

Contrairement à ce qui est le cas dans l'évangile, ce n'est que dans l'interprétation de la parabole que Prudence fait mention du fruit centuple en tant que conséquence d'un labeur continu sur le champ de l'âme. Il omet la référence évangélique aux autres fruits du sol fertile (soixante, trente). Tant dans l'évangile que dans la tradition exégétique, ces fruits avaient une signification eschatologique. Afin de renforcer ce sens, Prudence relie ici l'image du fruit centuple à une autre image agraire à sens eschatologique, à savoir le stockage de la récolte dans un *horreum*, image qui pourrait avoir été empruntée à la parabole du blé et de l'ivraie (Matth. 13, 24-30).<sup>24</sup> De plus, les vers

<sup>21</sup> Pour la valeur symbolique des épines dans la littérature chrétienne, voir les riches pages de P. Courcelle, "Saint Benoît, le merle et le buisson d'épines", *Journal des savants* (1967), pp. 154-161; V. Buchheit, "Ovis spinosa (Prud. Cath. 8, 33-40)", *Philologus* 134 (1990), pp. 57-61.

<sup>22</sup> *Effetus venis* lie deux significations de l'adjectif *effetus*. D'une part *effetus* s'emploie pour désigner des terres stériles et épuisées (voir Colum. 2, 4, 11; Verg., *Georg.* 1, 81; Sen., *Ben.* 1, 1, 2; Plin., *Nat. hist.* 18, 27), d'autre part l'adjectif peut désigner l'épuisement sexuel (voir Cic., *Sen.* 29; Ovid., *Am.* 3, 7, 6; Ambr., *Exp. de psalm.* 118, 19, 19; CSEL 62). Dans *Per.* 2, 215 *effetus* s'emploie dans le même sens que dans les *Livres contre Symmaque*.

<sup>23</sup> Voir Ps.-Ambr., *Laps.* 7, 29 (PL, 16).

<sup>24</sup> Voir aussi Matth. 3, 12; Lc. 3, 17. Pour l'*horreum* comme image du Règne futur, ThLL, vol. 6, c. 2988, r. 55-79.

1051-1054 sont une combinaison de Matth. 13, 23 et de Matth. 6, 20<sup>25</sup>, remis en vers de style virgilien.<sup>26</sup> Chez d'autres auteurs chrétiens, Matth. 6, 20 est également lié aux images agraires et, plus spécifiquement, au concept de l'*agricultura spiritualis*.<sup>27</sup>

Nous voilà arrivés à la fin de la réponse de Prudence à l'argument antichrétien que les mesures antipaïennes auraient provoqué des famines. Notre poète réalise toutefois une transition très spontanée vers la prochaine partie de son livre, à savoir le portrait contrasté de vierges chrétiennes et païennes (v. 1055-1113). Nous disions qu'à partir de 1040, Prudence abandonne la seule orientation de la parabole vers un public composé de *rustici* et considère chaque chrétien comme destinataire. Ceci est confirmé par les vers 1055-1063. Partiellement basés sur la dix-huitième lettre d'Ambroise,<sup>28</sup> ils mettent en évidence que les vers 1040-1054 ne doivent pas seulement être lus en fonction de ce qui précède et ne sont donc pas uniquement mis en relation avec le projet du *sapiens rusticus*, mais qu'ils doivent également être interprétés comme une description de l'ascèse chrétienne en général. Il est en effet évident que les vers 1055-1063 sont parallèles aux vers 1040-1054. Tout d'abord, les vers finaux des deux groupes ne parlent que du fruit centuple, contrairement à Matth. 13, 8; 23 et Mc. 4, 8; 20., où il est également question de soixante et trente fruits.

<sup>25</sup> *Thesaurizate autem vobis thesauros in caelo, ubi neque aerugo neque tinea demolitur, et ubi fures non effodiunt nec furantur.*

<sup>26</sup> Pour la combinaison de Matth. 13, 1-23 et de Matth. 6, 20, voir Augustin *Conf.* 13, 19, 24 (CCSL 27). Dans un catalogue de toutes sortes de vermine dans *Georg.* 1, Virgile parle entre autres du charançon du blé (*curculio*) et de la fourmi (*formica*): ... *saepe exiguus mus / sub terris posuitque domos atque horrea fecit, / aut oculis capti fodere cubilia talpae, / inventusque cavis bufo et quae plurima terrae / monstra ferunt, populatque ingentem farris acervom / curculio atque inopi metuens formica senectae* (v. 1, 181-186). Virgile lui-même imitait ces vers dans *Aen.* 4, 402-405: *ac velut ingentem formicae farris acervom / cum populant hiemis memores tectoque reponunt, / it nigrum campis agmen praedamque per herbas / convecant calle angusto* ... Pour les nombreuses références à ces vers dans l'Antiquité, voir P. Courcelle, *Lecteurs païens et lecteurs chrétiens de l'Énéide* (Paris, 1984), pp. 340-341. Prudence imite ici (1053-1054) les vers des *Georg.*: *Nec metui ne congestum populetur acervum / Curculio, vel nigra cavis formica recondat.* (Prudence préfère la forme déponente *populari* à la forme *populare* de Virgile. Pour l'emploi virgilien de la forme active, voir le commentaire de Servius, *Aen.* 4, 403: *Antique dixit: nam hoc verbum apud veteres activum fuit, nunc tantum deponens est*).

<sup>27</sup> Matth. 6, 20 et Lc. 12, 33 font partie d'un exposé qui confronte les richesses de la terre à celles du ciel, tout comme le font les vers de Prudence. Une différence avec le contexte prudentien est l'accent que mettent les phrases évangéliques sur la charité. Pour l'utilisation de Matth. 6, 20 dans un langage figuré emprunté à la vie agraire, voir Cyr., *Hab. virg.* 11 (CSEL 3, 1); Ambr., *Nab.* 7, 37 (CSEL 32, 2); Petr. Chrys., *Serm.* 7, 6 (CCSL 24, 1).

<sup>28</sup> Comparer le petit catalogue de vertus en 1056-1059 avec le début de *Ep.* 18, 12.

Cela est tout à fait normal pour les vers 1055-1063, vu qu'à la fin du quatrième siècle, le fruit centuple fut considéré comme symbole de la récompense céleste destinée aux vierges.<sup>29</sup> Par contre, pour les vers 1040-1054, il est moins évident que seulement le fruit centuple y soit mentionné, étant donné que le caractère de l'ascèse n'y est pas déterminé. Il se peut que Prudence n'y envisage qu'une expression générale de la vie éternelle, tout comme l'évangéliste Luc (Lc. 8, 8) et d'autres auteurs paléochrétiens ne désignent par le fruit centuple que la vie éternelle en général.<sup>30</sup> Ensuite, dans les vers 1061-1063, Matth. 6, 20 est à nouveau relié aux images agraires. Cette fois-ci, la menace pour la moisson stockée dans les *horrea* ne provient pas de vermine, comme à 1053-1054, mais bien d'un voleur. En Matth. 6, 20, tant la vermine que les voleurs sont appelés une menace pour la moisson, de sorte que nous pouvons dire que Prudence a éparpillé ce passage évangélique sur les vers 1053-1054 et 1061-1063. Le double parallèle entre 1051-1054 et 1060-1063 nous suggère de ne pas seulement lire 1040-1054 à partir de ce qui précède, mais aussi partant des vers suivants, qui ne traitent plus du projet d'une vie chrétienne à la campagne, mais bien de la virginité chrétienne. Il n'est d'ailleurs pas étonnant que les vers 1040-1054 puissent également être lus à partir des vers 1055-1063, vu que nous rencontrons aussi ailleurs l'application de l'image de l'*agricultura spiritualis* au mode de vie des vierges

<sup>29</sup> Les éditions de A. Dressel (*Aurelii Prudentii Clementis quae exstant carmina*. Ad vaticc. aliorumque codicum et optimarum editionum fidem recensuit, lectionum varietate illustravit, notis explicavit A. Dressel (Lipsiae, 1860), p. 296) et M.P. Cunningham (*Aurelii Prudentii Clementis carmina*. Cura et studio M.P. Cunningham (CCSL 126; Turnholti, 1966), p. 248) nous offrent la lecture *decies seni* pour le vers 1060, tandis que celles de J. Bergman (*Aurelii Prudentii Clementis carmina*, p. 285) et M. Lavarenne (*Prudence. Tome 3. Psychomachie. Contre Symmaque*, p. 194) nous offrent la lecture *decies deni*. Cunningham défend sa lecture en faisant référence à *Per.* 14, 121, où Prudence utilisait la vieille exégèse de Matth. 13, 8 et 23 (les trente fruits reviennent au fidèle ordinaire, les soixante aux vierges et les cent aux martyrs). Mais Athanase et Jérôme introduisaient une autre exégèse de ces vers évangéliques (les trente fruits reviennent aux mariées, les soixante aux veuves, les cent aux vierges). Nous préférons la lecture *decies deni* à cause de l'analogie avec *centuplicatos fructus* dans les vers 1051-1052. De plus, la raison pour laquelle Prudence utilisait la vieille exégèse en *Per.* 14, 121 était déterminée par le contexte spécifique de ce poème. Dans un éloge d'une martyre vierge, l'utilisation de la vieille exégèse est quasiment requise. Comparer *Per.* 14, 121 avec Cyprien, *Ep.* 76, 6, l'origine probable de ce vers Prudentien. Voir A. Quacquarelli, *Il triplice frutto della vita cristiana: 100, 60 e 30 (Matteo XIII, 8 nelle diverse interpretazioni)* (Roma, 1953), p. 31.

<sup>30</sup> Voir Juvenecus, 2, 753, 793; Paul.-Nol., *Ep.* 34, 8.

chrétiennes.<sup>31</sup> Prudence a donc appliqué l'image de l'*agricultura spiritalis* successivement aux agriculteurs chrétiens (v. 1020-1039), aux chrétiens en général (v. 1040-1054) et aux vierges chrétiennes (v. 1055-1063). Ainsi, les vers 1020-1063 ont créé une transition souple vers l'élaboration de l'opposition des vierges chrétiennes et des Vestales à partir de 1055. Compte tenu de cette fonction charnière, nous hésitons à croire que Prudence ait eu l'intention d'exprimer dans les vers 1020-1039 un mode de vie personnellement préféré. Une telle interprétation arrache, comme nous le verrons, ces vers de leur contexte spécifique.

#### 4. *L'image de l' 'animi cultura'*

La parabole du semeur poursuit un ensemble d'images qu'on retrouve tant bien ailleurs dans la Bible que dans la littérature classique. Dans la parabole biblique, les images des semailles par l'agriculteur et de l'absorption des semences par les terres thématisent la dépendance réciproque de la Parole divine et de la disposition morale de son destinataire. L'acte de semer représente la prédication et la divulgation de la Parole. Dans son interprétation de la parabole, le Christ n'explicite pas l'identité du semeur, tandis que dans la littérature biblique et patristique, l'image du semeur s'appliquait au Christ lui-même<sup>32</sup>, aux apôtres missionnaires et à leurs successeurs.<sup>33</sup> L'image du champ s'appliquait à l'humanité en général,<sup>34</sup> à l'Église,<sup>35</sup> ou à l'âme individuelle, et il était cultivé par Dieu lui-même,<sup>36</sup> par les

<sup>31</sup> Voir Method., *Symp.* 9, 251 (SC 95); Ambr. *Virginib.* 3, 16-17 (CSLP); Ps.-Ambr., *Laps.* 7, 29 (PL 16); Greg. Tur., *Glor. conf.* 34 (*Unde non immerito Georgia nuncupata est, quae sic exercuit mentem cultura spiritali, ut adepto virginitatis sexagesimi fructus proventu, egrediens de saeculo, coelestibus honoraretur exsequiis*; PL, 71).

<sup>32</sup> Voir Matth. 13, 37 (*qui seminat bonum semen est Filius hominis*); Hier., *Comm. in Matth.* 2, 13, 3 (CCSL 77).

<sup>33</sup> Voir LCS, *Pr.* 1, 1-4 (*Paulus ... Christum ... seminans*); Paul.-Nol., *Ep.* 10, 2-3 (CSEL 29). F. Thélamon (*Païens et chrétiens au IV<sup>e</sup> siècle. L'apport de l'Histoire ecclésiastique de Rufin d'Aquilée (Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité, 86; Paris, 1981), pp. 58-60*) traite des *semina fidei prima*, sernés par les apôtres et leurs successeurs à propos de Euseb./Rufin., *Hist. eccles.* 5, 10, 2-3 (GCS, 9, 1).

<sup>34</sup> Voir Matth. 13, 38 (*ager autem est mundus*); Ambr., *Exp. evang. sec. Luc.* 8, 52 (CCSL 14); Petr. Chrys., *Serm.* 164, 3 (CCSL 24b).

<sup>35</sup> Voir Ambr., *Vid.* 14, 83 (PL, 16); Cassiod., *Exp. Psalm.* 49, 11 (CCSL 97).

<sup>36</sup> Voir 1 Cor. 3, 9 (*Dei agricultura estis*); Chromat., *Serm.* 2, 2-3 (CCSL 9a).



apôtres et leurs successeurs,<sup>37</sup> ou par l'individu lui-même.<sup>38</sup> Dans ce dernier cas, l'individu était champ en même temps que cultivateur, ce qui est aussi le cas dans les vers 1020-1054.

Il nous semble pourtant justifié de confronter les vers ci-traités à des exemples classiques et païens de l'image de l'*animi cultura*. Les *Livres contre Symmaque* sont, en effet, une oeuvre apologétique visant selon toute probabilité le public de l'aristocratie romaine et de nombreuses indications révèlent qu'il doit s'agir d'un public censé disposer d'une grande connaissance de la littérature chrétienne et classique. En outre, cette confrontation nous semble nécessaire, vu que nous ne pouvons être d'accord avec la position de M. Kah, à savoir que, dans ce passage, Prudence "subit l'attraction quasiment magique que les projets philosophiques classiques exerçaient sur lui."<sup>39</sup> Dans ce qui suit, nous espérons démontrer que, conformément à une pratique bien diffusée chez les auteurs paléochrétiens, Prudence utilise la tradition littéraire classique sans pour autant perdre de vue ce qui l'en sépare.

L'image classique de l'*animi cultura* fait partie d'une imagerie empruntée à l'agriculture pour décrire le processus où un *animus* est introduit dans une discipline et y fait des progrès. Dans le cinquième livre de ses *Institutiones oratoriae* Quintilien cite la comparaison de l'exercice de l'âme à la culture de la terre:

...ut, si animum dicas excolendum, similitudine utaris terrae, quae neglecta sentes ac dumos, culta fructus creat<sup>40</sup>.

Dans le huitième livre, il cite la même comparaison et suppose qu'il s'agit d'une comparaison connue de tous:

Illa vulgaria videri possunt et utilia tantum ad conciliandam fidem: 'ut terram cultu, sic animum disciplinis meliorem uberiolemque fieri' et 'ut medici ...'.<sup>41</sup>

Dans le deuxième livre de son *De oratore*, Cicéron utilise l'image pour indiquer le processus vers la maturité artistique:

<sup>37</sup> Voir Ambr., *Vid.* 14, 83 (PL 16); Hier., *Ep.* 129, 2 (CSEL 66); Caes. Arel., *Serm.* 1, 5-6 (SC 175).

<sup>38</sup> Voir Ps.-Clem., *Recogn.* 6, 3 (PG 1, 1347-1348); Ambroise, *Enarr. in psalm.* 36, 12 (CSEL 64); Hier., *In Hierem. Proph.* 1, 70-71 (CSEL 59); Paul.-Nol., *Ep.* 34, 8 (CSEL 29).

<sup>39</sup> Voir Kah, *Die Welt der Römer mit der Seele suchend*, p. 307.

<sup>40</sup> Voir 5, 11, 24.

<sup>41</sup> Voir 8, 3, 75.

Subactio mihi ingenio opus est, ut agro non semel arato, sed et novato et iterato, quo meliores fetus possit et grandiores edere. Subactio autem est usus, auditio, lectio, litterae.<sup>42</sup>

Nous retrouvons un écho de cette *cultura* cicéronienne chez Pline le Jeune. Dans une lettre adressée à Julius Nason<sup>43</sup>, il mentionne un manque de ressources provenant de ses terres toscanes et transpadanes, tandis que seul son domaine laurentin lui procure des bénéfices. Pourtant il affirme n'y posséder qu'une maison et un modeste jardin. Les bénéfices ne proviennent en effet pas de la *terrae*, mais bien de l'*animi cultura*:

Ibi enim plurimum scribo, nec agrum, quem non habeo, sed ipsum me studiis excolo; ac iam possum tibi ut aliis in locis horreum plenum sic ibi scrinium ostendere.<sup>44</sup>

Les textes de Cicéron et Pline le Jeune cités dans l'alinéa précédant traitent de fruits extérieurs, à savoir des discours et des lettres, et se raccordent ainsi à l'image des textes qui poussent sur le champ de l'*ingenium*.<sup>45</sup> Cependant, des formes d'*animi cultura* ne visant pas de tels fruits extérieurs, mais bien des fruits intérieurs sont plus importantes pour notre objectif. Il s'agit ici d'une élaboration philosophique de l'image, contrairement à cette élaboration rhétorique.<sup>46</sup> L'exemple le plus ancien et le plus connu de la littérature latine se trouve dans le deuxième livre des *Tusculanae* cicéroniennes.<sup>47</sup> Cicéron y utilise l'image pour exprimer que la philosophie ne peut produire le même effet sur chacun. La semence de la philosophie atteint un meilleur résultat sur une bonne terre, dont par ailleurs beaucoup de philoso-

<sup>42</sup> Voir 2, 30, 131

<sup>43</sup> Voir *PIR*<sup>2</sup>, 4, 437.

<sup>44</sup> Voir 4, 6, 2. Comparer cette lettre avec *Ep.* 7, 9 destinée à Cn. Pedanius Fuscus Salinator (*PIR*<sup>1</sup>, 3, 144). Celle-ci commence comme suit: *Quaeris, quemadmodum in secessu, quo iam diu fruieris, putem te studere oportere*. En guise de réponse Pline offre d'abord une série d'exercices littéraires très divers et ajoute: *Ut enim terrae variis mutatisque seminibus, ita ingenia nostra nunc hac, nunc illa meditatione recoluntur* (7, 9, 7). Quintilien parle de ces exercices dans le même sens: *Scribendum ergo quam diligentissime et quam plurimum. Nam ut terra alte refossa generandis alendisque seminibus fecundior, sic profectus non a summo petitus studiorum fructus et fundit uberius et fidelius continet* (10, 3, 2).

<sup>45</sup> Comparer avec Cic., *Brut.* 4, 16 (*modo idem noster animus efficere possit quod ager, qui quom multos annos quievit, uberiores efferre fruges solet*); Tac., *Dial.* 6, 6 (*Nam in ingenio quoque, sicut in agro, quamquam alia diu serantur atque elaborentur, gratiora tamen quae sua sponte nascuntur*).

<sup>46</sup> Pour une confrontation d'une telle *ingenii cultura* rhétorique et l'*animi cultura* philosophique, voir Sénèque *Ep.* 108, 23.

<sup>47</sup> Voir A. Novara, "Cultura: Cicéron et l'origine de la métaphore latine", *BAGB* (1986), pp. 51-66 51-66, plus particulièrement 52-55.

phes ne disposent pas. L'image exprime donc l'idée que tant la nature que la philosophie sont nécessaires pour atteindre le fruit de la vertu. Sans un sol adéquat, le labourage et les semailles ne servent à rien, de même qu'une bonne terre n'est pas productive sans labourage ni semailles:

Nam ut agri non omnes frugiferi sunt qui coluntur, falsumque illud Accii:

Probae etsi in segetem sunt deteriore datae  
Fruges, tamen ipsae suapte natura enitent,  
sic animi non omnes culti fructum ferunt. Atque, ut in eodem simili verser, ut ager quamvis fertilis sine cultura fructuosus esse non potest, sic sine doctrina animus; ita est utraque res sine altera debilis. Cultura autem animi philosophia est; haec extrahit vitia radicitus et praeparat animos ad satus accipiendos eaque mandat iis et, ut ita dicam, serit, quae adulta fructus uberrimos ferant.<sup>48</sup>

Plus tard, l'image cicéronienne sera répétée à double reprise par Horace. Tout d'abord, il y a sa lettre 1, 14 adressée à son *vilicus*, où Horace oppose la *terrae cultura* de celui-ci à sa propre *animi cultura*:

Vilice silvarum et mihi me reddentis agelli,  
/ ... /  
certemus, spinas animone ego fortius an tu  
evellas agro, et melior sit Horatius an res.<sup>49</sup>

La suite de la lettre 1, 14 fait supposer qu'Horace, tout comme Pline dans la lettre traitée ci-avant, relie son *animi cultura* à l'amour de la vie campagnarde. Voyez à cet effet l'expression *mihi me reddentis agelli*. L'autoconnaissance et la santé morale d'Horace sont la récolte d'une *animi cultura* devenue possible à la campagne. L'image revient une seconde fois dans *Ep.* 1, 1 adressée à Mécène. Après avoir déclaré qu'il est devenu trop âgé pour la rédaction de poèmes lyriques et qu'il ne veut plus que s'appliquer au bien moral (v. 10-19), et après avoir posé que le progrès et pas la perfection morale est son but (v. 28-32), Horace conseille de prêter une oreille attentive à la philosophie, car c'est d'elle que dépend ce progrès:

Invidus, iracundus, iners, vinosus, amator:  
nemo adeo ferus est, ut non mitescere possit,  
si modo culturae patientem commodet aurem.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Voir *Tusc.* 2, 5, 13.

<sup>49</sup> *Ep.* 1, 14, 1-5.

<sup>50</sup> *Ep.* 1, 1, 38-40.

Dans les derniers vers horatiens, où il n'est plus question d'une combinaison de l'*animi cultura* avec la vie campagnarde, l'image reçoit une fonction parénétique. Il en est de même pour la conclusion également parénétique de la lettre 73 de Sénèque. Là aussi, l'image est développée en relation avec le thème du progrès moral<sup>51</sup> et nous pensons qu'un examen plus détaillé de l'élaboration de l'image par Sénèque peut clarifier la relation de l'usage prudentien par rapport à la tradition classique. Il s'agit des mots suivants:

Non sunt di fastidiosi, non invidi; admittunt et ascendentibus manum porrigunt. Miraris hominem ad deos ire? Deus ad homines venit, immo quod est propius, in homines venit; nulla sine deo mens bona est. Semina in corporibus humanis divina dispersa sunt, quae si bonus cultor excipit, similia origini prodeunt et paria iis, ex quibus orta sunt, surgunt; si malus, non aliter quam humus sterilis ac palustris necat ac deinde creat purgamenta pro frugibus. Vale.<sup>52</sup>

Dans l'esprit du premier fragment horatien, l'individu est ici considéré en même temps comme le labouré et le laboureur (*Semina in corporibus humanis divina dispersa sunt, quae si bonus cultor excipit*).<sup>53</sup> Cependant, il n'est pas semeur. Parce que les semences sont innées dans l'âme, elles ne sont pas semées par après par la philosophie, comme c'est le cas dans l'exemple cicéronien.<sup>54</sup> Contrairement au texte cité des *Tusculanae*, l'image de l'*animi cultura* est ici en effet rattachée à la théorie stoïcienne des *semina virtutum*.<sup>55</sup> Le point de départ de cette théorie est l'idée que la *virtus* n'est pas innée dans l'homme, mais qu'il est conforme à la nature humaine de la développer. Chaque personne a en soi des semences pouvant se développer en *virtus*, moyen-

<sup>51</sup> Pour l'exposé suivant, nous avons utilisé I. Hadot, *Seneca und die griechisch-römische Tradition der Seelenleitung* (*Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie*, 13; Berlin, 1969), pp. 147ss; L. Alfonsi, "Potuit esse verus Dei cultor ... (Lattanzio, Div. Inst. VI, 24, 13): Sestio, Seneca e i vangeli", *Athenaeum* N.S. 54 (1976), pp. 175-176; M. Scarpato-Bellincioni, *Studi senecani e altri scritti* (Brescia, 1986), pp. 16-33; M. Armisen-Marchetti, *Sapientiae facies. Étude sur les images de Sénèque* (*Collection d'études anciennes*, 58; Paris, 1989), pp. 233-246.

<sup>52</sup> Voir *Ep.* 73, 15-16.

<sup>53</sup> Voir M. Armisen-Marchetti, *Sapientiae facies*, pp. 235-236.

<sup>54</sup> Contrairement à Cic., *Tusc.* 2, 5, 13 et Sen., *Ep.* 38, 2, où la semence n'est pas identique aux *semina virtutum*, mais aux doctrines philosophiques. Dans ces textes, la fonction de la semence est comparable à celle de la semence dans la parabole du semeur.

<sup>55</sup> Pour la théorie des *semina virtutum*, voir Cic., *Fin.* 5, 18; Germ. Caes. *Arat.* 134; Quint. 2, 20, 6; Gell. 12, 5, 7; I. Hadot, *Seneca und die griechisch-römische Tradition der Seelenleitung*, p. 148.

nant l'attention et les soins nécessaires. L'homme n'est donc pas né avec la vertu, mais bien avec la capacité de la développer. Cela implique que la vertu présente dans l'enfant de façon potentielle sera toujours menacée par des influences externes, contraires à la nature humaine (par exemple l'influence d'une mauvaise éducation).<sup>56</sup> C'est pourquoi Sénèque dit que personne, même pas les savants, ne peut rester à l'abri de ces influences et que temporellement la prise au piège par les *vitia* précède la *virtus*. Quoique les *vitia* ne peuvent en aucun cas être appelés primaires, l'impact de ces influences maléfiques est si grand que le développement d'une vertu parfaite devient un processus infini. L'aspiration de développer les *semina virtutum* et la lutte contre les *vitia* secondaires sont représentées chez Sénèque par l'image de l'*animi cultura*. La philosophie nous enseigne comment nous devons veiller à notre 'sol' (à savoir notre *animus*) où les *semina virtutum* peuvent croître et porter des fruits (à savoir la *virtus*). Cela implique une lutte intérieure, également thématifiée plus tard par les auteurs chrétiens. En outre, les *semina virtutum* sont chez Sénèque identiques à la présence dans l'homme du Pneuma divin. L'image de l'*animi cultura* croise ainsi un autre thème sénéquien, à savoir celui du *deus internus*. Chez lui, l'orientation vers le bien par la présence des *semina virtutum* est plus d'une fois assimilée à la présence du divin dans l'homme,<sup>57</sup> ou, comme dans le passage ci-discuté, dans le corps humain.<sup>58</sup> Voilà pourquoi Sénèque dit dans ce passage que personne ne peut atteindre la vertu sans Dieu (*nulla sine deo mens bona est*). Les lecteurs influencés par le christianisme doivent bien réaliser qu'il n'est en aucun cas question d'une sorte de grâce donnée par un dieu personnel. La présence de Dieu se limite à la présence dans l'homme des *semina virtutum*. Partant de cette présence, le processus de l'*animi cultura* devra finalement culminer en une élévation de l'homme à un statut divin: *Dedit [natura] tibi illa [semina] quae si non deserueris, par deo surges*.<sup>59</sup>

Cette discussion de l'*animi cultura* dans la tradition classique doit nous permettre d'offrir une estimation correcte de ce que Prudence

<sup>56</sup> Voir *Ep.* 50, 8. D'où l'origine différente des *semina vitiorum* (*Ep.* 123, 8) et des *semina virtutum* (*Ep.* 94, 29; 73, 16; 108, 8).

<sup>57</sup> Voir *Ep.* 41, 2.

<sup>58</sup> Voir *Ep.* 31, 11; 66, 12.

<sup>59</sup> Voir *Ep.* 31, 9. Comparer avec *Ep.* 92, 30; 124, 23; 48, 11; 18, 12; 31, 11; Bellincioni, *Studi senecani*, p. 28.

veut dire lorsqu'il utilise des expressions telles que *animum colere* (v. 1021), *cordis segetem disponere* (v. 1037) et *cultus internus* (v. 1038). Nous souhaitons y procéder par une référence au concept de l'*usus iustus* développé par Ch. Gnilka.<sup>60</sup> L'avantage de ce concept est qu'il nous incite à adopter une attitude critique chaque fois qu'est suggérée une trop large dépendance d'un auteur paléochrétien par rapport à des exemples païens. C'est ce que récemment M. Kah a fait à partir du passage ci-traité. Elle concentre son interprétation de l'expression *animum colere* (v. 1021) surtout sur la manière dont Prudence paraphrase la parabole (v. 1020-1039). Or, dans cette paraphrase, l'expression *semina cum sulcis committitis* (v. 1024) forme, comme nous l'avons vu, une déformation de la parabole évangélique. Et partant de cette déformation, M. Kah résume ainsi l'essentiel de la version prudentienne de la parabole: "Sie selbst sind es also, die die Rolle des Säckmanns übernehmen, und es ist ihr eigenes Herz, in das sie das Saat der christlichen Lehre ausstreuen."<sup>61</sup> A cause de ce glissement, les vers de Prudence ont, toujours selon M. Kah, perdu l'aspect social et communicatif du message de leur modèle évangélique<sup>62</sup>: "Das Heil der eigenen Seele rückt ins Zentrum. Der soziale Aspekt interessiert kaum mehr; die Einbindung in eine übergeordnete Gemeinschaft und der Bezug zu ihr werden zweitrangig und sind in Gefahr, verloren zu gehen."<sup>63</sup> Ensuite elle répète la constatation de J. Fontaine que l'expression *animum colere* (v. 1021) rejoint plus une formulation traditionnelle et classique (*animi cultura*) qu'une formulation chrétienne (*cordis cultura*),<sup>64</sup> et tout en accentuant le rôle que joue la volonté individuelle dans les vers 1020-1054,<sup>65</sup> elle conclue: "Das alles macht deutlich, dass Prudentius mit seiner 'Real-Utopie' eines asketischen Lebens ... der nahezu magischen Anziehungskraft erlegen ist, die die klassischen Philosophieentwürfe auf ihn ausübten."<sup>66</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Voir Ch. Gnilka, *Der Begriff des 'rechten Gebrauchs' (XPHEIE. Die Methode der Kirchenväter im Umgang mit der antiken Kultur, 1; Basel-Stuttgart, 1984).*

<sup>61</sup> Voir Kah, *Die Welt der Römer mit der Seele suchend*, p. 306.

<sup>62</sup> Kah résume l'essentiel de la parabole évangélique comme suit: "Es gehört in den Zusammenhang des Missionierungsauftrags an die Jünger und ist auf die Sammlung einer 'ecclesia' hin orientiert; das Bild hat so einen stark sozial-kommunikativen Charakter." (voir *Die Welt der Römer mit der Seele suchend*, p. 304)

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Kah, *Die Welt der Römer mit der Seele suchend*, p. 306.

<sup>64</sup> Voir Kah, *Die Welt der Römer mit der Seele suchend*, p. 307; Fontaine, "Valeurs antiques et valeurs chrétiennes", p. 591.

<sup>65</sup> Voir Kah, *Die Welt der Römer mit der Seele suchend*, p. 306.

<sup>66</sup> Voir Kah, *Die Welt der Römer mit der Seele suchend*, p. 307.

Pourtant elle estime que Prudence va également au-delà de ce cadre païen-philosophique: “Wenn aber der ‘secessus’<sup>67</sup> einem ‘Ergriffenwerden’ durch Christus folgt [un propos qu’elle justifie à l’aide de l’expression *adsumptis colonis* dans 1023], dann wird er sich bei aller durch die Situation vorgegebenen Autarkie in einer letzten Abhängigkeit von seinem Gott wissen.”<sup>68</sup>

Tout d’abord, l’*animi cultura* est tant chez Sénèque (et Horace) que chez Prudence une image de la lutte intérieure des *proficientes* stoïciens et chrétiens. Une comparaison de notre texte à d’innombrables autres descriptions de l’*animi cultura* chrétienne révèle une certaine absence d’éléments bibliques dans la description que fait Prudence de la *cultura* elle-même<sup>69</sup>, et l’accent qu’il met sur la responsabilité et les efforts de la volonté humaine dans ce processus. Considérons par exemple la description suivante fournie par saint Paulin de Nole:

Si [anima tua] vasta peccatis quasi dumis sordeat neque prophetis aut apostolicis nubibus compluatur, in aridam solitudinem gratia deserente damnabitur. Si vero sui diligens orationibus crebris semet excolat et sacris litteris opimetur et intimum cordi aratrum crucis inprimat et rastro divini timoris spinas suas eruat ignitoque dei verbo uratur in culpis, luminetur in sensibus: tunc necesse est ut spatium in tuo corde patrem familias et omnes animae tuae regiones peragrarare delectet ...<sup>70</sup>

Jusqu’ici nous pouvons nous rallier à la position de M. Kah et admettre l’importance de la responsabilité personnelle dans les vers de Prudence. Cependant, outre le fait que Fontaine a nuancé sa constatation en observant que Prudence emploie également la formule plus biblique *cordis segetem disponit* (v. 1037)<sup>71</sup>, nous estimons que les vers 1020-1034 ne peuvent se lire séparément de l’interprétation donnée

<sup>67</sup> Kah interprète les vers 1020-1039 en présupposant que Prudence parle ici du *secessus in villam* aristocratique (voir *Die Welt der Römer mit der Seele suchend*, p. 302-309).

<sup>68</sup> Voir Kah, *Die Welt der Römer mit der Seele suchend*, p. 308.

<sup>69</sup> Nous parlons ici du seul acte de cultivation et pas des éléments qui l’entourent et forment un ensemble avec lui.

<sup>70</sup> Voir *Ep.* 39, 3. Cette description est pleine d’éléments d’origine biblique, tels que *apostolicae nubes, orationes crebrae, sacrae litterae, aratrum crucis, rastrum divini timoris*. Ces éléments reviennent également dans plusieurs descriptions paléochrétiennes de l’*animi cultura*. Voir Ambr., *Enarr. in psalm.* 36, 12 (CSEL 64); *Exp. evang. sec. Luc.* 8, 43 (CCSL 14); Chromat., *Serm.* 2, 2-3 (CCSL 9a); Rufin., *Bened. patr.* 2, 13 (CCSL 20); Paul.-Nol., *Ep.* 24, 11 (CSEL 29). Pour la pluie céleste, voir Hebr. 6, 7-8; Is. 55, 10-11. Pour l’*aratrum crucis*, voir J. Daniélou, *Les symboles chrétiens primitifs* (Paris, 1961), pp. 101ss.

<sup>71</sup> Voir Fontaine, “Valeurs antiques et valeurs chrétiennes”, p. 591.

par Prudence lui-même en 1040-1054. Vu la scission constatée plus haut entre la version prudentienne de la parabole et l'interprétation qu'il en donna, les conclusions que M. Kah a tiré à partir du seul vers 1024, nous semblent très dangereuses.<sup>72</sup> De plus, les vers 1040-1050 prouvent également qu'il est faux de parler de deux tendances au sein du texte prudentien (autarchie vs grâce). Ces vers nous montrent, en effet, dans quelle mesure notre poète considère la propre responsabilité dans le processus de perfection comme liée à l'aide divine. Nous remarquons déjà que pour Sénèque, l'aide et la présence divines dans ce processus se limitaient à la présence innée des *semina virtutum* dans la nature de l'âme humaine. Or, c'est précisément la dépendance de l'homme d'une aide divine extérieure qui, chez Prudence, est exprimée par l'image des semences à protéger: *fides* (v. 1045), *Deum, spem qua vescimur intus* (v. 1047), *fides* (v. 1050) sont résumés par le mot *charismata* (v. 1046). La menace de cette semence est à son tour présentée à l'aide de formulations typiquement chrétiennes: le mot *peccamen* (v. 1043)<sup>73</sup> et l'image des épines (*passim*)<sup>74</sup> sont en effet d'origine chrétienne et suggèrent l'objet spécifique de l'ascèse chrétienne indiquée par l'image de l'*animi cultura*. Le stoïcien doit exterminer le mal présent en lui, mais vu que le mal n'est que secondaire, il dispose en principe de moyens pour entamer la lutte et déployer sa nature divine (*semina virtutum*). Le chrétien, par contre, doit livrer un combat avec un mal d'un caractère différent. C'est pourquoi nous devons accorder toute son importance à l'emploi du mot *peccamen*. L'ascèse chrétienne n'est pas un combat que mène l'homme à l'aide de son propre intellect et de sa propre volonté

<sup>72</sup> Nous voulons quand même remarquer que les auteurs chrétiens disposaient également d'une image des semailles dans le propre cœur, qui ne contredisait pas le contenu de la parabole du semeur. Ceci est illustré par les mots suivants dans Hier., *Comm. in Matth.* 2, 13, 32 (CCSL 77) à propos de Matth. 13, 32 (*simile est regnum coelorum grano sinapis, quod accipiens homo seminavit in agro suo*): *Homo qui seminat in agro suo, a plerisque Salvator intellegitur, quod in animis credentium seminet. Ab aliis, ipse homo seminans in agro suo, hoc est, in semetipso et in corde suo. Quis est iste qui seminat, nisi sensus noster et animus, qui suscipiens granum praedicationis, et fovens sementem humore fidei, facit in agro sui pectoris pullulare?*

<sup>73</sup> Voir *peccamen*, in: ThLL, vol. 10, c. 879, r. 69.

<sup>74</sup> Selon Courcelle ("Saint Benoît, le merle et le buisson d'épines", pp. 154-161), la littérature païenne n'a pas connu cette image. Buchheit ("Ovis spinosa (Prud. Cath. 8, 33-40)", pp. 56-61) considère Horace *Ep.* 1, 14, 3 et *Ep.* 2, 2, 212 comme des cas isolés. Selon lui, quelques passages bibliques sont à la base de l'emploi fréquent de l'image dans la littérature chrétienne: Gen. 3, 18; Cant. cant. 2, 2; Mc. 15, 17; Joh. 19, 2 et 5.



contre ce qui est seulement secondaire, mais bien une lutte entamée en pleine dépendance de Dieu contre la propre nature peccable.<sup>75</sup>

### 5. *Prudence et le secessus in villam aristocratique*

Les textes de Pline et d'Horace cités plus haut traitaient d'une combinaison de la vie à la campagne (*secessus in villam*) et de l'*animi cultura*. La *cultura* cicéronienne devait également être placée dans le décor campagnard des *Tusculanae*. Ces textes reflètent l'idéal de vie aristocratique du *secessus in villam*, que J. Fontaine a typé comme "un *otium* doublement *negotiosum*" où "le triple exercice ... des travaux champêtres, du bâtiment et de la chasse (ou la pêche) ... alterne avec l'exercice plus intellectuel de la lecture et de la composition littéraires."<sup>76</sup> Cet idéal a également exercé une attirance considérable sur bon nombre d'auteurs chrétiens. Pensons seulement aux mois qu'Augustin a passé à Cassiciacum.<sup>77</sup> J. Fontaine a traité la présence de ce thème dans les oeuvres d'Ausone, de Paulin de Nole et de Prudence, et estima retrouver dans les vers 1020-1039 l'attraction d'un tel *secessus in villam* christianisé.<sup>78</sup> Récemment M. Kah et E. Colombi l'ont suivi dans cette opinion<sup>79</sup>. Nous souhaitons compléter notre étude par quelques questions critiques à propos de cet avis. Nous y procéderons par le biais d'une confrontation de notre texte avec la lettre 39 de saint Paulin de Nole, dans laquelle il nous offre une description de cette *animi cultura* aristocratique et chrétienne à la campagne.

<sup>75</sup> Pour une confrontation des ascèses stoïcienne et chrétienne, voir M. Spanneut, *Permanence du stoïcisme: de Zénon à Malraux* (Gembloux, 1973), pp. 135ss, 151ss; A. Jagu 1989, "La morale d'Épictète et le christianisme", *ANRW*, 2, 36, 3 (Berlin-New York, 1989), pp. 2184-2185, 2190-2192. Fontaine ("Valeurs antiques et valeurs chrétiennes", p. 586) oppose également l'*animi cultura* chrétienne à l'idéal philosophique païen.

<sup>76</sup> Voir Fontaine, "Valeurs antiques et valeurs chrétiennes", pp. 576-577.

<sup>77</sup> Voir *Contr. acad.* 1, 15; 2, 10; D. E. Trout, "Augustine at Cassiciacum: *otium* and the social dimensions of conversion", *Vigiliae Christianae* 42 (1988), p. 137; R. A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge-...-Sydney, 1990), pp. 73-74.

<sup>78</sup> Voir Fontaine, "Valeurs antiques et valeurs chrétiennes", *passim*; E. Colombi, "*Rusticitas e vita in villa nella Gallia tardoantica: tra realtà e letteratura*", *Athenaeum* 84 (1996), pp. 405-431. Pour la présence du thème dans les beaux-arts, voir C. Lafon, "Images du paysan et de la société rurale dans l'occident chrétien à la fin de l'antiquité (IVe-VIe siècles). La confrontation des sources littéraires et iconographiques", *Caesarodunum* 23 (1988), pp. 125-134.

<sup>79</sup> Voir Kah, *Die Welt der Römer mit der Seele suchend*, p. 302-309; Colombi, "*Rusticitas e vita in villa nella Gallia tardoantica*", p. 418.

Nous reprenons ici donc le problème de la coprésence de l'agriculture matérielle et spirituelle dans les vers 1020-1039. Tout comme Herzog, on peut affirmer que l'accent mis sur l'agriculture matérielle est exigé par le contexte actuel des *Livres contre Symmaque*, déterminé par une problématique économique-religieuse. Selon nous, cette constatation est correcte, mais on ne peut pas pour autant perdre de vue que pour Prudence et ses contemporains chrétiens, l'agriculture était plus qu'une activité économique. Pour eux, ce travail productif avait également un sens spirituel, conformément à la lecture symbolique qu'ils faisaient de la nature en général.<sup>80</sup> Une telle lecture symbolique du travail matériel est faite dans la lettre 39 de Paulin de Nole adressée à Aper et Amanda<sup>81</sup>, dans laquelle il veut supprimer une opinion erronée, existant chez ses amis. Dans une lettre à Paulin et Thérasia, ils s'étaient plaints de devoir s'occuper de leurs possessions terrestres, tandis qu'en fait ils aspiraient aux choses célestes. En réponse, Paulin souhaite leur montrer que ces soins sont orientés vers le perfectionnement de leurs foi et vertu, conformément au plan de Dieu.<sup>82</sup> Paulin estime en effet que la nature n'est pas seulement utile à l'homme au niveau physique, mais également au niveau spirituel:

Quis ambigat in omni loco mundi, in omni parte naturae utilitates humano <generi> paratas, e quibus non solum carnalia emolumenta capiamus, sed multo magis spiritalia perlegamus?

Aper et Amanda doivent donc déchiffrer le message que Dieu a caché dans la vie rurale. Que celle-ci nous offre un message spirituel ne relève d'ailleurs pas d'une interprétation arbitraire qu'on fait du labeur pour des raisons rhétoriques (comparer les exemples de Quintilien). Cette activité a en effet un sens voulu par le Créateur lui-même:

Propterea dicit per Salomonem ipsa rerum opifex Sapientia, quae disponit omnia suaviter, ab Altissimo creatam rusticationem<sup>83</sup>, ut eam non corporali tantum sed etiam spiritali studio colas.

<sup>80</sup> Pour un exposé détaillé de la lecture symbolique que faisaient les chrétiens de la nature, voir Ch. Gnllka, "Die Natursymbolik in den Tagesliedern des Prudentius", *Pietas. Festschrift für Bernhard Kötting*, éd. K. S. Frank (*JbAC. Ergänzungsband*, 8; Münster, 1980), pp. 411-446; V. Buchheit, "Ovis spinosa (Prud. Cath. 8, 33-40)", pp. 54-55.

<sup>81</sup> Pour ces personnes, voir P. Fabre, *Essai sur la chronologie de l'oeuvre de saint Paulin de Nole* (*Publications de la faculté des lettres de Strasbourg*, 109; Paris, 1948), pp. 75ss.

<sup>82</sup> Nous résumons ici le contenu de *Ep.* 39, 2-3 (CSEL 29). *Carm.* 28, 258-313 (CSEL 30) contient une argumentation fort similaire.

<sup>83</sup> Voir *Eccles.* 7, 16.

Pour cette raison, le Christ aussi a emprunté beaucoup d'éléments à la vie campagnarde dans ses paraboles, par exemple dans celle du semeur:

Itaque nos agrum suum dixit seque ipsum ostendit in nobis vitae nostrae satorum, et animarum discrimina variis terrarum expressit ingeniis, ne sterilis sit caveamus, nos quoque ipsos ad fecunditatem deo debitam et nobis utilem contentis in lege domini studiis excolamus.

C'est pourquoi les propriétaires fonciers chrétiens doivent voir dans le travail de leurs fermiers une image de la propre *animi cultura*. La citation suivante nous évoque sans plus le souvenir de la confrontation d'Horace de la propre *animi cultura* avec la *terrae cultura* de son *vilicus*:

Igitur cum in agro es et rus tuum spectas, te quoque ipsum Christi agrum esse cogita et in te sicut in agrum tuum respice. Qualem agri tui speciem fieri a vilico tuo postulas, talem deo domino cordis tui redde culturam et intellege, quicquid in agro tuo tibi displiceat aut placeat, idem in anima tua placere Christo aut displicere.<sup>84</sup>

Paulin se sert de la relation du *dominus* avec son *vilicus* afin d'illustrer la relation de Dieu avec Aper et avec l'homme en général.<sup>85</sup> La relation comparable est employée par Prudence pour représenter le rapport de Dieu avec son peuple (*adsumptis ... colonis*, v. 1023). La différence entre les deux auteurs se situe cependant dans le fait que, dans les vers 1020-1039, Prudence ne lit pas la nature du point de vue du propriétaire foncier, mais bien de celui du paysan en général et, plus particulièrement, du *colonus*.

D'abord, la première personne plurielle dans les vers 1001-1006a et 1015-1019 (*utimur*, 1005; *solvimur, exultamus*, 1017) indique la possibilité que Prudence se représente comme faisant partie des agriculteurs dont il indique à la fois le travail manuel et la foi chrétienne. En outre, par la relativisation de la valeur des produits matériels du point de vue de la *spes* chrétienne, il nous offre une version chrétienne du *parvo vivere* horatien, un idéal qui est reflété dans l'emploi du mot *agelli* (v. 1003; 1012) et dans la probable réminiscence horatienne *sapiens et*

<sup>84</sup> Comparer avec Caes. Arel, *Serm.* 6, 5 (SC 175).

<sup>85</sup> En ce qui concerne la relation *dominus-vilicus*, voir aussi Lc. 16, 1-2. Comparer avec Leo Magn., *Serm.* 14, 1 (CCSL 138); Caes. Arel., *Serm.* 6, 5 (SC 175).

*rusticus* (v. 1020).<sup>86</sup> Le choix des *coloni* comme public cible des *praecepta* du Christ (v. 1023) rejoint cette représentation des vers 1001-1006a et 1015-1019. Nous pouvons donc conclure que Prudence s'y présente au moins comme *sapiens rusticus* horatien et chrétien.

Toutefois, il ne dit nulle part que la première personne plurielle renvoie au groupe des propriétaires fonciers et rien n'empêche qu'il parle des paysans en général. Par contre, dans les vers 1006b-1014, notre poète montre par le renvoi aux rites païens populaires un souci de la foi de la *plebs rusticana*, qu'il partage avec plusieurs de ses contemporains chrétiens. Plus d'un texte de la fin du quatrième et du début du cinquième siècles témoigne d'une préoccupation du salut des *rustici* et des *coloni* de la part des autorités ecclésiastiques. Surtout la forte présence de sanctuaires païens sur les *latifundia* de propriétaires fonciers chrétiens était insupportable pour de nombreux dirigeants chrétiens.<sup>87</sup> Or, puisque les vers 1001-1019 opposent la foi de l'agriculteur chrétien (v. 1001-1006a; 1015-1019) à la superstition de l'agriculteur païen (v. 1006b-1014), il est bien possible que l'éloge du *sapiens rusticus* en 1020-1039 doive être interprété comme une sorte d'exhortation à la vie chrétienne adressée aux paysans en général ou, plus particulièrement, aux petits *coloni* (v. 1023).<sup>88</sup> Si cette interprétation est correcte, Prudence a transformé la parabole du semeur en une série de *praecepta* adressés à des *coloni* pour en faire la base biblique de leur nouveau style de vie. A travers la parabole du semeur, il

<sup>86</sup> Voir Hor., *Sat.* 2, 2, 1ss, (cf. n. 14); Fontaine, "Valeurs antiques et valeurs chrétiennes", p. 591 n. 90 ("Comparer chez Prudence 'sapiens et rusticus idem' avec la présentation d'Ofellus, archétype horatien de la frugalité ('vivere parvo') et modèle de sagesse pour les petits propriétaires terriens ('metato in agello': rapprocher dans Prudence ... : 'christicolum agellos'), dans *Sat.* 2, 2, 3.").

<sup>87</sup> Dans ces textes est souvent traité le problème de la présence de sanctuaires païens sur les champs de propriétaires fonciers chrétiens vivant souvent en ville. Ceux-ci ont le devoir, selon beaucoup de Pères chrétiens, de veiller à la religiosité de leurs *coloni*. Voir Joh. Chrys., *In Act. Apost.* 18, 4-5 (PG, 60); Max. Taur., *Serm.* 91 (CCSL 23); Gaudent., *Tract.* 13, 28 (CSEL 68); Aug., *Serm.* 62, 17-18 (PL, 38). Pour cette problématique, voir également F.J. Dölger, "Christliche Grundbesitzer und heidnische Landarbeiter. Ein Ausschnitt aus der religiösen Auseinandersetzung des vierten und fünften Jahrhunderts", *Antike und Christentum. Kultur- und Religionsgeschichtliche Studien* 6 (Münster, 1950), pp. 297-320; R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100-400)* (New Haven-London, 1984), pp. 64-67, 147-148.

<sup>88</sup> Cette interprétation est impliquée dans la paraphrase que Dölger a offerte des vers 1006b-1023. Voir "Christliche Grundbesitzer und heidnische Landarbeiter", p. 300. D'ailleurs, le renvoi aux *coloni* en 1023 fait penser au choix de saint Félix pour la vie de simple métayer (*colonus*) à la fin du seizième chant de Paulin de Nole (v. 284ff; CSEL 30).

leur conseille de lire dans leur propre travail sur les champs le message que Dieu y a caché. Par son attention pour le labeur du *colonus*, Prudence partage avec Paulin et d'autres auteurs la fascination pour la vie rurale. La vie qu'il décrit dans 1020-1039 est cependant en premier lieu celle du paysan en général et pas directement l'*otium* doublement *negotiosum* qui caractérise l'aristocratique *secessus in villam*.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Nous allons plus loin que W. Evenepoel ("Prudence et la conversion des aristocrates romains", *Augustinianum* 30 (1990), p. 32: "Tout aussi indémontrable est une hypothèse de J. Fontaine; cet auteur veut voir dans Prudence un propriétaire foncier, qui aurait transformé l'idéal antique du *secessus in villam* dans un sens chrétien. Si dans *Symm.* 2, 1020 ss. Prudence se montre enthousiaste à propos d'une vie qui unit *agri cultura* et *animi cultura*, il ne reste pas moins que dans le passage de l'*Hymnus matutinus* déjà cité, il oppose son nouveau genre de vie e.a. à celui du *rusticus* [*Cath.* 2, 43].") et affirmons que la combinaison prudentienne de *agri* et *animi cultura* ne renvoie pas nécessairement au *secessus in villam* aristocratique. Un texte où la combinaison de l'*agricultura* et de l'*animi cultura* a la même fonction que chez Prudence, est le sixième sermon de Césaire d'Arles. Ce sermon est adressé à un public d'agriculteurs grands et petits, et les incite à ne pas uniquement labourer leur champ, mais également leur âme. Ici aussi, la coprésence des deux thèmes ne désigne pas nécessairement une vie aristocratique composée du double *negotium* dont parle J. Fontaine.

## CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA'S FIRST EPISCOPAL YEARS

A. Davids\*

### *Cyril and Nestorius*

Not very much is known about Cyril of Alexandria (ca. 378-444), founder of classical Christology, prior to 428, in which year Nestorius, Archbishop of Constantinople, became his rival in Christological matters. In particular, the Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451) are linked with his name. Later, Cyril's theological views were honoured by the Councils of Constantinople in 553 and 680-81.

When Nestorius' ideas about Christ as both God and man reached Egypt, they were soon disputed by the desert monks. Cyril was urged to act and, in the spring of 429, wrote a long letter "to the priests and deacons, to the fathers among the monks and to those leading a solitary life" in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> In this letter he pointed out that the anti-Arian formula of faith of the Council of Nicaea (325) implied that Mary was to be called "Mother of God" (θεοτόκος), a term which Nestorius had refused to use. Instead, he insisted on calling Mary "Mother of Christ" (Χριστοτόκος). In this, Cyril saw a revival of Arianism, which he had been attacking since about 423-25.<sup>2</sup> Cyril's arguments are mainly drawn from the anti-Arian works of Athanasius (295-373), his predecessor at the See of Alexandria, who had most strongly opposed Arianism in the fourth century.

Cyril's first anti-Nestorian reaction was directed at the churches and monasteries within the boundaries of his own ecclesiastical territory and was moderate: Nestorius is not even mentioned by name. But the whole issue would soon escalate. Both Nestorius and Cyril tried to gain support from Pope Celestine of Rome. Cyril won and, with the backing of Rome, he finally wrote a (third) letter to

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\* I would like to thank Mrs. A. Lentz-Michaelis for the correction of my English text.

<sup>1</sup> Cyr. Alex., *Ep.* 1, ACO I, I, 1, pp. 10-23.

<sup>2</sup> G. Jouassard, "Cyrill v. Alexandrien", RAC 3, 499-516, here c. 508.

Nestorius, in which he called his teaching blasphemous and in which he summoned Nestorius to disavow his "heresy":

Consequently you must confess in writing and on oath that you anathematise your foul and profane teachings and that you hold and teach what we all do, the bishops and teachers and leaders of the people throughout the West and East.<sup>3</sup>

This threatening letter would become a central issue of Christological debate in the East. Notwithstanding Cyril's wishes, it was not canonized by the Council of Ephesus in 431.

Rivalry between the great Sees of the Church also played an important role. Cyril had every interest in evoking the Council of Nicaea. In the year 325, the fathers of the Council had defined the authority of the Bishop of Alexandria over Egypt, Libya and Pentapolis "since a similar custom exists with reference to the Bishop of Rome".<sup>4</sup> Antioch was only mentioned after Alexandria and Constantinople had not yet been founded. Only in 381 at the Council of Constantinople was the See of Constantinople placed after the See of Rome in the official hierarchy, as "the new Rome".<sup>5</sup> In Athanasius' time, there had been a great deal of friction between Alexandria and the imperial city. Cyril's immediate predecessor, his uncle Theophilus (385-412), had succeeded in having the Antiochene John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople since 398, removed from his See during the Synod of the Oak in 403. Cyril had accompanied his uncle on that occasion and had been present at the trial, after which Theophilus only narrowly escaped from a furious mob which demonstrated in John's favour.<sup>6</sup>

In Cyril's view, Nestorius was an Antiochene-Constantinopolitan rival who had dared to have different ideas, was stubborn, and had to submit or be ousted. Cyril's letter of 429 to the monks of Egypt ends with a rebuke of Jews and heathens:

Worship him [Christ] as one and do not divide him into two after the union [of the natures]. Then the insane Jew shall mock in vain, for only

<sup>3</sup> Cyr. Alex., *Ep.* 17, 2, ACO I, I, 1, p. 34, trans. J.A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy. Its History, Theology, and Texts*, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae*, 23 (Leiden, 1994), p. 267.

<sup>4</sup> Council of Nicaea (325), c. 6, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, I, ed. N.P. Tanner (London - Washington, 1990), pp. 8-9.

<sup>5</sup> Council of Constantinople (381), c. 3, *Decrees* (n. 4), p. 32.

<sup>6</sup> Sozomenus, *Hist. Eccl.* VIII, 19, PG 67, 1565 A and Cyr. Alex., *Ep.* 33, 4 (from 432), ACO I, I, 7, p. 147; trans. McGuckin (n. 3), p. 338. John Chrysostom's name would be inserted in the diptychs of Alexandria as late as the year 418.

then indeed shall he be convicted of having sinned not against a man like us, but against God himself, the Saviour of all. Then let him hear this: 'Woe sinful race, people full of sin, evil lineage and lawless children. You have abandoned the Lord and angered the Holy One of Israel' (Isa. 1, 4). Likewise, the children of the Greeks will in no way be able to ridicule the faith of the Christians, for we have not worshipped a mere man, God forbid, but rather God by nature, because we recognised his glory even though he came as we are while remaining what he was, that is God.<sup>7</sup>

Criticism of Jews and Greeks is, of course, common in early Christian apologetics and especially in Cyril's early works. Already in his first Festal Letters, which date from his first episcopal years, Cyril denounced the fault of double-mindedness (*διψυχία*), meaning the rather equivocal attitude of Christians in Alexandria towards pagan rites. The problem continued to interest him because in later years he even wrote a book against the pagan revival by the fourth-century Emperor Julian the Apostate.<sup>8</sup> How Cyril dealt with Judaism in his first Festal Letters will be examined briefly in the following. His attitude towards Judaism and the Old Testament has been carefully studied by A. Kerrigan and R.L. Wilken,<sup>9</sup> but neither author has used Cyril's Festal Letters systematically.<sup>10</sup>

### *Cyril's education and first episcopal years*

What is known of Cyril's youth stems mainly from later sources.<sup>11</sup> Cyril must have been between five and ten years old when his uncle Theophilus became Bishop of Alexandria in 385. Theophilus took his sister, Cyril's mother, and Cyril into his household. Then Theophilus

<sup>7</sup> Cyr. Alex., *Ep.* 1, 27, ACO I, I, 1, p. 23, trans. McGuckin (n. 3), p. 261.

<sup>8</sup> Jouassard, "Cyrill v. Alexandrien" (n. 2), c. 505 comments on Cyril's anti-pagan polemics: "Das ganze Material müsste gesammelt werden (...)". A part of Cyril's work against Julian is now available in *Sources Chrétiennes* (vol. 322): *Cyrille d'Alexandrie, Contre Julien*, I, *Livres I et II*, eds. P. Burguière and P. Évieux (Paris, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> A. Kerrigan, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Interpreter of the Old Testament*, *Analecta Biblica*, 2 (Rome, 1952); R.L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology* (New Haven - London, 1971).

<sup>10</sup> The first ten Festal Letters (PG 77, 401 ff.) have been published in *Sources Chrétiennes: Cyrille d'Alexandrie, Lettres Festales I-VI*, Introduction générale par P. Évieux, introduction critique, texte grec par W.H. Burns, traduction et annotation par L. Arragon et al., SC 372 (Paris, 1991); Tome II: *Lettres Festales VII-XI*, sous la direction de P. Évieux, texte grec par W.H. Burns, traduction et annotation par L. Arragon, P. Évieux, R. Monier, SC 392 (Paris, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> See Évieux in SC 372, p. 11 ff.



sent his nephew to the monks of Nitria, where, according to the tenth-century source of Severus ibn al Moqaffa, Cyril spent five years. At the Council of Ephesus, Cyril said about those early years: "From an early age we have learned the holy Scriptures and have been taught by the orthodox and holy fathers".<sup>12</sup> Pierre Évieux suggests that by these "fathers", Cyril meant his uncle Theophilus, the learned Didymus the Blind (died 398) and the Alexandrian teachers (διδάσκαλοι) who regularly gave catechetical instruction.<sup>13</sup> But Cyril could also have had in mind the holy monks who lived in the Nitrian desert and in the Kellia at the time that he was there: Macarius of Alexandria, Evagrius of Pontus, Ammonius and his brothers. Back at his uncle's house, Cyril assisted him as private secretary. Within a few days of Theophilus' death in October 412, he became his successor, notwithstanding the opposition of the rival archdeacon, Timothy, who was backed by the imperial commander, Abundantius.<sup>14</sup>

Immediately after his election as Bishop of Alexandria, Cyril gave proof of his intolerance towards other confessions and beliefs. As Socrates, a contemporary of Cyril's, relates in his *Ecclesiastical History*,<sup>15</sup> he managed to close the churches of the Novatians at Alexandria and have their treasures confiscated. Socrates also writes about three other incidents from Cyril's early episcopal years in Alexandria, where

the (...) public is more delighted with tumult than any other people: and if at any time it should find a pretext, breaks forth into the most intolerable excesses; for it never ceases from its turbulence without bloodshed.<sup>16</sup>

At certain festivities dancers gave performances at the theatre, which

<sup>12</sup> ACO I, I, 3, p. 22, 8-10.

<sup>13</sup> Évieux in SC 372, p. 13.

<sup>14</sup> Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* VII, 7, PG 67, 749 C: "Whereupon on the third day after the death of Theophilus, Cyril came into possession of the episcopate, with greater power than Theophilus had ever exercised", trans. A.C. Zenos in *Socrates, Sozomenus: Church Histories*, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, II, 2 (Edinburgh, repr. 1989), p. 156. On Socrates' antipathy towards Theophilus see G.F. Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories: Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, and Evagrius*, *Théologie historique*, 46 (Paris, 1977), p. 170; and p. 179 on his relationship with the pagan teachers who after the anti-Christian riots at Alexandria in 389 had fled to Constantinople.

<sup>15</sup> Socr., *ibid.*; H.J. Vogt, *Coetus Sanctorum: Der Kirchenbegriff des Novatian und die Geschichte seiner Sonderkirche*, *Theophaneia*, 20 (Bonn, 1968), pp. 264-265 mentions the episode en passant. For Socrates' sympathy for the Novatians see Chesnut, *First Christian Histories* (n. 14), p. 176.

<sup>16</sup> Socr., *Hist. Eccl.* VII, 13, PG 67, 761 A, trans. Zenos, p. 159.

often provoked quarrels between the different parties, especially between Jews and Christians. The new prefect, Orestes,<sup>17</sup> tried to gain control of this situation and issued new regulations. Once, a certain Hierax, teacher in the elementary school (γραμματικός) and enthusiastic attendant of Cyril's sermons, showed up in the theatre, was recognised by the Jews and accused of having come to make trouble. Orestes suspected Cyril of sending Hierax to spy on him. He had Hierax arrested and publicly tortured in the theatre, whereupon Cyril threatened the Jewish leaders with severe retribution if they continued to molest the Christians. The Jews felt unnecessarily provoked and planned to lure the Christians into a trap. At night they ran into the streets shouting that the "church of Alexander" was on fire. Many Christians who left their houses in order to extinguish the fire were killed. Next morning, Cyril made his appearance; with "an immense crowd" he took possession of the Jewish synagogues and had them plundered. Socrates tells of the expulsion of the Jews:

Thus the Jews who had inhabited the city from the time of Alexander the Macedonian were expelled from it, stripped of all they possessed and dispersed, some in one direction and some in another.<sup>18</sup>

The year in which this happened is usually given as 414 or 415.<sup>19</sup> It is, however, hard to believe that all the Jews from the whole city had to leave. It may be that the Jews were expelled from the centre of the city. Orestes appealed to the Emperor, as too did Cyril. Cyril was urged by his people to try to make peace with the prefect, but the humiliated Orestes refused all negotiations. The animosity between the two men remained.

On another occasion, Cyril had invited some 500 monks from the desert to come to Alexandria in order to support his claim to authority in the city. When they saw Orestes passing by in his chariot, they started shouting at him and calling him an idolatrous pagan. Orestes tried in vain to explain that he was baptised a Christian by Bishop Atticus of Constantinople. His bodyguards fled and Orestes was hit

<sup>17</sup> Orestes was *praefectus Augustalis* at Alexandria from 412 to 415/416, see art. "Orestes" [11], *RE* 35, 1, 1011-1012; J.R. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, II (Cambridge, 1980), p. 810 has only: 415.

<sup>18</sup> Socr., *Hist. Eccl.* VII, 13, trans. Zenos, p. 159.

<sup>19</sup> See Éviéux in *SC* 372, p. 51, n. 2: with a preference for the year 415. E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, I, 1 (Paris - Bruges, 1959), p. 276 does not give a date. A. Demandt, *Die Spätantike: Römische Geschichte von Diocletian bis Justinian 284-565 n. Chr.*, Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft, III, VI (Munich, 1989) has on p. 165 the year 415 and on p. 433 the year 414. Wilken, *Judaism* (n. 9), p. 56: "perhaps in A.D. 414".

on the head by a stone thrown by the monk Ammonius. Finally, citizens of the town succeeded in rescuing the prefect and driving the furious monks back. Ammonius was arrested and so badly punished that he died. Cyril struck back by giving Ammonius a solemn burial and putting him on the list of martyrs under the name of Thaumasio (‘‘the Admirable’’). People of Cyril’s church did not approve of this gesture and veneration of the new ‘‘martyr’’ was soon dropped.<sup>20</sup>

The next disastrous provocation was the murder of Hypatia, a most distinguished philosopher, who had close relations with Orestes. Here, Socrates mentions the year: it happened in March, during Lent, in the fourth year of Cyril’s episcopate, under the tenth consulate of the Emperor Honorius and the sixth of the Emperor Theodosius II.<sup>21</sup> According to E. Stein, who follows O. Seeck, it was the year 415 or 416.<sup>22</sup> It was said of Hypatia that she had prevented the improvement of relations between Cyril and Orestes. In any case, she was dragged from her carriage by a mob of Christians lead by a certain Peter,<sup>23</sup> taken to the church called Caesareum, stripped and torn apart; her limbs were burnt at a place called Cinaron.<sup>24</sup> In how far Cyril was responsible for this cruel event is disputed among historians. Socrates’ comment on this sad event says enough:

And surely nothing can be farther from the spirit of Christianity than the allowance of massacres, fights, and transactions of that sort.

Alexandria’s name as ‘‘noble centre of Hellenism’’, as the Emperor Julian (the ‘‘Apostate’’) had liked to call the city,<sup>25</sup> was damaged

<sup>20</sup> Socr., *Hist. Eccl.* VII, 14, PG 67, 765 A-768 A.

<sup>21</sup> Socr., *Hist. Eccl.* VII, 15, PG 67, 769 A.

<sup>22</sup> Stein, *Histoire* (n. 19), p. 277; Demandt, *Spätantike* (n. 19), pp. 165, 427: the year 415; also J. Rougé, ‘‘La politique de Cyrille d’Alexandrie et le meurtre d’Hypatie’’, *Cristianesimo nella storia*, 11 (1990), pp. 485-504, here p. 485.

<sup>23</sup> The mob must have consisted of *parabolani*/παρὰβολᾶνοι. See on these sick-nurses/bodyguards at the disposal of the Alexandrian bishop: Éviex in SC 372, pp. 57-61 with comments on J. Rougé, ‘‘Les débuts de l’Épiscopat de Cyrille d’Alexandrie et le Code Théodosien’’, *ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΙΝΑ: Hellenisme, judaïsme et christianisme à Alexandrie. Mélanges offerts au P. Claude Mondésert* (Paris, 1987), pp. 339-349. Besides from the *Codex Theodosianus*, the *parabolani* are also known from the council of Chalcedon, ACO II, I, p. 179, 28: οἱ μονάζοντες ... καὶ οἱ παραβαλανεῖς.

<sup>24</sup> Socr., *Hist. Eccl.* VII, 15, PG 67, 768 A-769 A.

<sup>25</sup> Jul., *Ep.* 10 (nr. 60), *L’empereur Julien: Oeuvres complètes*, ed. J. Bidez, I, 2 (Paris, 2d ed., 1960), p. 72, 2-4. According to M. Dzielska, *Hypatia of Alexandria* (Cambridge, Mass.-London, 1995), p. 97 Cyril was ‘‘a chief instigator of the campaign of defamation against Hypatia, fomenting prejudice and animosity against the woman philosopher, rousing fear about the consequences of her alleged black-magic spells on the prefect, the faithful of the Christian community, and indeed the whole city.’’

forever. In all this, Cyril was a 'worthy' successor to his uncle Theophilus, under whose episcopate the famous Serapeion had been destroyed in the early nineties of the fourth century.<sup>26</sup> The Museion of Alexandria vanished together with the Serapeion; according to the Suda (tenth century), Hypatia's father, the mathematician Theon, had been the last member of the Museion in Alexandria.

*War to the Jews: Cyril's first Festal Letters*

The start of Cyril's episcopal career is also generally thought to be the beginning of his literary activity and the years 428/429, which brought the first confrontations with Nestorius, are always taken to be a turning point in Cyril's literary career.<sup>27</sup> Cyril's first books are exclusively dedicated to the exegesis of the Pentateuch: his *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate* and the complement to it, the *Glaphyra in Pentateuchum*. Further, extensive commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets and on Isaiah have been preserved. Only after 420 did he turn to the explanation of the New Testament (a commentary on the Gospel of St. John) and to anti-Arian polemics.

Immediately after becoming Bishop, Cyril continued the traditional Alexandrian custom of writing *Heortastikai epistolai*, Festal Letters, in which, as head of the Egyptian Church, he annually informed the bishops and monks in Egypt about the date on which Easter was to be celebrated. These letters also gave him the opportunity of dealing with different kinds of urgent ecclesiastical and religious affairs. Cyril is the first Alexandrian church leader of whom an almost complete set of letters for all the years he was in function has been preserved: twenty-nine Festal Letters for the years 414 until 442.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Stein, *Histoire* (n. 19), p. 209. *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 10, 11 (16 June 391) forbids all pagan cult in Egypt.

<sup>27</sup> See G. Jouassard, "L'activité littéraire de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie jusqu'à 428", *Mélanges I. Podechard* (Lyon, 1945), pp. 159-174, here p. 170, and id., "Cyrill v. Alexandrien" (n. 2), c. 500 and the criticism by J. Liébaert, *La doctrine christologique de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie avant la querelle nestorienne*, Mémoires et travaux publiés par des professeurs des Facultés Catholiques de Lille, 58 (Lille, 1951), pp. 12-16: Cyril's Commentary on St. John would be his first exegetical work. Cp. H. du Manoir, "Cyrille d'Alexandrie", *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* 2, 2672-2683, here col. 2674 and E.R. Hardy, 'Cyrillus von Alexandrien', *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 8, 254-260, pp. 256-257.

<sup>28</sup> These Festal Letters [*F.L.*] are traditionally numbered as nrs. 1-30; there is no nr. 3 in the series (SC 372, p. 113). See also n. 10.

In his first Festal Letter—about the date of Easter for the year 414—Cyril introduces himself as successor to Theophilus and as the new preacher of the Gospel and quotes from the Bible: “You shall speak and no longer be dumb” (Ezech. 24, 27). He sets the tone by attacking the Jews, who celebrate their Passover ostentatiously on the fourteenth of Nisan. There are many Old Testament texts to prove that the Jews have deserted God, such as Hos. 4, 6:

Because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt not minister as priest to me; and as thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy children.<sup>29</sup>

To be excluded from the service of the Lord is the worst possible punishment; the memory (μνήμη) that God had of Israel has been badly damaged. Also among the texts of the Old Testament is Jer. 7, 16-18:

Therefore pray not thou for this people, and intercede not for them to be pitied, yea, pray not, and approach me not for them: for I will not hearken unto thee (...).<sup>30</sup>

From Jer. 9, 17-18 he quotes:

Call ye the mourning women and let them come, and send to the wise women, and let them utter their voice; and let them take up a lamentation for you;

and Cyril adds: “because the flock of the Lord is sorely bruised”.<sup>31</sup> Also remarkable in the same context is the quotation of Lam. 4, 18-19:

Our time has drawn nigh, our days are fulfilled, our end<sup>32</sup> is come. Our pursuers were swifter than the eagles of the sky.<sup>33</sup>

Such words will easily have stirred up the feelings of Cyril’s followers, in particular people like Hierax and Ammonius. This Festal Letter was read in all the churches and monasteries in Egypt at the begin-

<sup>29</sup> Hos. 4, 6 LXX, trans. L.C.L. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* (London, 1851, repr. Grand Rapids, Mich., 1982). In fact, Cyril reads in his text of the Septuagint not “that thou shalt not minister as priest” (τοῦ μὴ ἱερατεῦειν), but “I shall reject you from being a priest to me” (τοῦ ἱερατεῦειν), Cyr. Alex., *F.L.* I, 6, 80 f., SC 372, p. 178.

<sup>30</sup> *F.L.* I, 6, 68 ff., SC 372, p. 178.

<sup>31</sup> *F.L.* I, 6, 104-107, SC 372, p. 180. The last added words are from Jer. 13, 17, which can be added to the apparatus in the edition of SC.

<sup>32</sup> Cyril reads τὸ πέρας, the LXX has ὁ καιρός.

<sup>33</sup> *F.L.* I, 6, 110-112, SC 372, p. 180.

ning of 414; it must therefore have been composed by the end of the year 413 and it may have served as the first step that led to the expulsion of the Jews from Alexandria as recorded by the church historian Socrates.

The Festal Letter for the next year (415) could hint at the sad events of 414. Cyril begins by stating that he did not want to be outdone by the Jews, who take pride in the letter of the Law, which is mere shadow of the (Christian) truth, and who proclaim their holy days with trumpets (cf. Ps. 80, 6). Then he continues:

When I examine everything that happened (τὰ γεγονότα), a great many things appear which it would be very reproachable to conceal.

He thanks God for his benefactions.<sup>34</sup> By "the events", Cyril could have had the conflict with the Jews in mind. If this is the case, then the expulsion of the Jews can be dated more precisely as having happened in the later part (summer?) of the year 414.

### *The Old Testament*

"The Law and the Prophets" (the Old Testament) is called by Cyril the letter (γράμμα), image (εἰκών), appearance (σχῆμα), shadow (σκιά), and, most often, figure (τύπος). The New Testament offers truth (ἀλήθεια), power (δύναμις) and moral perfection (κατόρθωμα). Contemplation (θεωρία) establishes the link between the two Testaments and their real meaning.<sup>35</sup> The contemplated, allegorical realities are called θεωρήματα.

Of the biblical figures, Abraham and Moses are very often mentioned. It is because of the obedience of the "righteous" and "blessed" (μακάριος) Abraham, the father of the Hebrew people, that the people came to embrace godly fear (εὐλάβεια) and the true cult. This change (μετάθεσις) and the coming to the knowledge of God made, as it were, a new people, distinct from all other nations. But

<sup>34</sup> *F.L.* II, 2, 1-4, SC 372, p. 194.

<sup>35</sup> See B. de Margerie, *Introduction à l'histoire de l'exégèse*, I: *Les Pères grecs et orientaux* (Paris, 1980), pp. 273-275; Wilken, *Judaism* (n. 9), pp. 69-92 and esp. the monograph of Kerrigan, *St. Cyril* (n. 9), p. 116: "St. Cyril's favourite expression θεωρία seems to have been derived from the Platonic tradition", with a reference to H.N. Bate, "Some technical terms of Greek exegesis", *Journ. of Theol. Stud.*, 24 (1922-23); p. 61; on p. 385 Kerrigan writes: "St. Cyril's spiritual interpretations reveal a strong anti-Jewish bias."

through neglect of the true belief, the Hebrews subsequently fell back into their former atheistic state; besides that, they did not believe in Christ and became unfaithful (ἄσέβεια), which was also said by Hos. 7, 13:

Woe to them! For they have started aside from me: they are cowards; for they have sinned against me (ἠσέβησαν εἰς ἐμέ).<sup>36</sup>

The fact that Abraham had a child from his wife Sara and from the Egyptian slave Hagar (Gen. 16), has nothing to do with voluptuousness or pleasure-seeking.<sup>37</sup> According to Cyril, Hagar, being superfluous, fled after the birth of Isaac; then an angel told her to return to Sara and to submit to her. Cyril thus combines two passages from Gen.: Gen. 16, 8 (Hagar flees before Ismael's birth) and Gen. 21, 8-20 (Hagar is sent away after Ismael's birth and does not return). In his view, this is an allegory of the two covenants, as Paul also stated in Gal. 4, 22-26: the covenant at Sinai (Hagar) and the covenant of the heavenly Jerusalem (Sara). But Cyril also puts forward another thought: in Abraham he sees the old αἰών, the times of old (ὁ γέρον χρόνος), and in Sara the whole of human nature with its fertility, birth and maturity. The cohabitation of the human race with the αἰών is as in a cosmic bridal room under the vast firmament.<sup>38</sup> This marriage long remained childless and was put to the test. Sara welcomed the illegitimate offspring of Abraham, but Ismael was born from the Egyptian, dark, "so-called" wisdom of the world, which is a servant of pseudo-gods. Finally, Isaac was born as a symbol (τύπος) of Christ and has made foolish the wisdom of the world (cf. 1 Cor. 1, 20). Cyril notes that he is following a rather free allegory of the history. He makes use of a Philonic interpretation, already taken over from Philo before him by Clement of Alexandria: Hagar stands for secular culture, Sara for real wisdom; secular philosophy is the servant of truth. Isaac becomes the forefather of a whole nation, with whom the Lord makes a new covenant.<sup>39</sup>

Moses, the "lawgiver", the "blessed" (μακάριος), and, in imitation of

<sup>36</sup> *F.L.* IV, 4, 50-51, SC 372, p. 258.

<sup>37</sup> *F.L.* V, 3, SC 372, pp. 292-300.

<sup>38</sup> *F.L.* V, 3, 7-8, SC 372, p. 300.

<sup>39</sup> *Clem. Alex., Strom.* I, V, 30, SC 30, p. 67. See also the important note in SC 372, p. 294. Cp. for "the new covenant": Jer. 31, 31 LXX and Hebr. 8. On the Hagar and Sarah motif: A. van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and his Use of Philo in the Stromateis: An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, 3 (Leiden, 1988), pp. 23-47, esp. pp. 34-35.

Philo and Clement of Alexandria, also called "teacher of sacred truths" (ἱεροφάντης), is Cyril's own rhetorical model. As newly consecrated bishop, he appeals to Moses' dilatory attitude to God's call: "I am weak in speech, and slow-tongued" (Exod. 4, 10). He feels himself the least of all (ἐλάχιστος), quoting Jer. 1, 7: "O Lord, Thou that art supreme Lord, behold, I know not how to speak, for I am a child."<sup>40</sup>

Moses' rod, cast on the ground, became a serpent, and, taken up, turned again into a rod (Exod. 4, 2-4).<sup>41</sup> This rod is a symbol for the conversion of mankind. False Egyptian doctrines entangle man in sin and the passions of the flesh (the poisonous serpent), but he is able to regain his original state. This idea of μεταμόρφωσις has been recognised by R. Wilken as the central theme of Cyril's spiritual message.<sup>42</sup>

### *Jewish rituals*

Jewish rituals, such as fasting, circumcision and keeping the Sabbath, are often targeted in the first Festal Letters. Jews do not really fast, although they are proud of following the rules about it. Does not Christ in the Gospels speak about the Pharisee, who says:

God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get (Luke 18, 11-12)?<sup>43</sup>

Fasting is not only abstaining from food and drink; one must also resist vice. Jews do not follow the real meaning of the proscriptions; they are unclean and live in fornication and prostitution. This was already known from the Old Testament, because the Lord said (to King Josias):

<sup>40</sup> *F.L.* I, 2, 24-27, SC 372, p. 148. Origen deals with Moses' words of Exod. 4, 10 in his third homily on Exod., but according to him God opens the mouth of Moses and the prophets, not the mouth of the user of the biblical sentence (as Cyril does), see the text in *Origène: Homélies sur l'Exode*, eds. P. Fortier and H. de Lubac, SC 16 (Paris, 1947), pp. 102-104. Gregory of Nyssa does not use the text of Exod. 4, 10 in his Life of Moses. On Moses see B. Botte, "Das Leben des Moses bei Philo" and J. Daniélou, "Moses bei Gregor von Nyssa: Vorbild und Gestalt", *Moses in Schrift und Überlieferung* (Düsseldorf, 1963), pp. 173-181 and pp. 289-306.

<sup>41</sup> *F.L.* II, 8, 1-11, SC 372, p. 226 and note. Cyril's explanation also, and more developed in his *De ador.* II, PG 68, 244 A-245 A.

<sup>42</sup> Wilken, *Judaism* (n. 9), esp. p. 92. The term does not appear in the index of Wilken's book.

<sup>43</sup> *F.L.* I, 5, 13-16, SC 372, p. 170.



Hast thou seen what things the House of Israel has done to me? They have gone<sup>44</sup> on every high mountain, and under every shady tree, and have committed fornication there. And I said after she had committed all these acts of fornication, Turn again to me. Yet she returned not. (Jer. 3, 6-7)

Circumcision is merely of the flesh. Cyril places circumcision in a context of traditional Christian Alexandrian anthropology: the human mind (νοῦς) contains the seeds of virtue, which it has been given by the creator. But oblivion (λήθη) became like a cover and a fog bank over it and man succumbed to earthly matters and uncleanness. This cover, however, can be thrown off, sin can be abjured and the innocent state of paradise regained. Adam's original confidence in God (παρρησία) can be regained through this transformation (μεταστοιχείωσις).<sup>45</sup> Circumcision is only valuable if undergone spiritually, that means for God, as Jer. 4, 4 says: "Circumcise yourselves to your God, and circumcise your hardness of heart."<sup>46</sup> According to Cyril, St. Paul means the same in 1 Cor. 7, 19 and in Rom. 2, 25-27: circumcision is utterly unimportant; it is only of value for those who follow the Law of the Covenant. Abraham practised circumcision as a seal of his justification by God. This seal (σφραγίς) is a sign of the formula of faith at baptism.<sup>47</sup>

According to Cyril, fleshly circumcision is even ridiculous. It is not practised by any other living creature. Why should man, the highest creature, made in the image of God, have his body mutilated, and that at the organ which serves for procreation?<sup>48</sup>

The keeping of the Sabbath is also belied by nature, which does not know a weekly day of rest. Cyril has two explanations of the institution of the Sabbath in Exod. 20, 11 ("For in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, and the sea and all things in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it."). Historically, according to the letter of the

<sup>44</sup> *F.L.* I, 6, 45-49, SC 372, p. 176. Cyril reads ἐπορεύθη instead of ἐπορεύθησαν of the Septuagint. Both Cyril and LXX have for "they committed ... fornication" the plural ἐπόρευσαν.

<sup>45</sup> *F.L.* VI, 8, SC 372, pp. 368-372.

<sup>46</sup> Jer. 4, 4 with var., *F.L.* VI, 8, 67, SC 372, p. 374.

<sup>47</sup> *F.L.* VI, 8, 77-86, SC 372, pp. 374-376.

<sup>48</sup> *F.L.* VI, 7, 1-42, SC 372, pp. 364-368. Origen had called circumcision "ill-sounding" (κακέμφατον), a word which Rufinus has taken over in Greek in his Latin translation of Origen's *Hom. in Gen.* III, 6, see *Origène: Homélie sur la Genèse*, SC 7 bis (Paris, 1976), p. 139, n. 2.

Scriptures, the Sabbath was introduced to recognise God as creator of the universe. By following Egyptian idolatry and adoring heaven, earth, sun, moon and stars as gods, the Hebrew people apostasised and had to learn again that God was the maker of all things; therefore a particular day had to be consecrated to His divinity. Spiritually—which only Christians can understand—the Sabbath means the rest of the faithful in Heaven after the final judgment at the end of time. The σαββατισμός as exposed in Hebr. 4, 9 means this rest of the saints in reward of their good deeds in their earthly life—a rest which will be final and eternal and in which no assault of the Devil or of sin occurs, because by then the Devil is punished in Hell and sin is dead.<sup>49</sup>

The Old Testament has a relative significance. It was given to the Hebrews; but notwithstanding their pedagogical means, Moses and the prophets could not raise the cover from their minds. People did not listen to them (cf. Jer. 7, 25). Finally God sent His Son, born of the Holy Virgin,<sup>50</sup> in order to make an end to this apostasy. In Christ the final renewal in the history of mankind has appeared.

### *A final remark*

This renewal is called ἀνανέωσις, μεταποίησις, καινοτομία, μεταστοιχείωσις, ἀναγέννησις. These terms, which also occur “with uncommon frequency” in Cyril’s other works, express the deepest meaning of his spiritual message. F.L. Cross has pointed out that Cyril makes an abundant use of compounds with prepositions: “The material in our files has disclosed that Cyril coined a highly distinctive vocabulary. There are well over 1,000 words which occur either in Cyril alone or in Cyril for the first time or in Cyril more frequently than in the whole of Greek literature taken together. These Cyrilline words are compounds of common words or verbal elements with prepositional prefixes. Characteristic instances are ἀναφοιτάω, γραοπρεπής, κατωθέω, προαναθρέω. Especially frequent are compounds with κατα- and συν-, in each case numbering between 100 and 150. These words are so characteristic that their occurrence is a

<sup>49</sup> F.L. VI, 11, 72-95, SC 372, pp. 388-390.

<sup>50</sup> The Holy Virgin is, of course, not yet called θεοτόκος in these early years of Cyril’s episcopate.

sure test of Cyrilline authorship.”<sup>51</sup> R.L. Wilken has insisted on the technical meaning of compounds with ἀνα- and μετα-. Further, he draws attention to the use of the verbs διαπλάττω, ἐπιχρωματίζω, μεθίστημι, μεταπλάττω, μεταχαράττω, μεταχρωματίζω, ἀναμορφώω, παραφέρω. As yet, little further research has been done in this field.<sup>52</sup>

### Conclusion

Of Cyril of Alexandria's early works only his Festal Letters can be dated exactly. They present a powerful spiritual message on the renewal of life through Christ. Elements of this message are also to be found in Cyril's other early works, such as *De adoratione et cultu*, *Glaphyra*, and his Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets and on Isaiah.

Cyril's view on the meaning of the Old Testament is closely linked with his anti-Jewish feelings. In the polemics against the Jews, for which his yearly encyclicals (Festal Letters) offer ample opportunity, he yields in almost nothing to John Chrysostom in his sermons against the Jews preached in Antioch in 386/387.<sup>53</sup> John Chrysostom is usually regarded as the most ferocious polemicist against Judaism among the Church Fathers,<sup>54</sup> but Cyril has the inglorious honour of

<sup>51</sup> F.L. Cross, “The projected Lexicon of Patristic Greek”, *Actes du VIe congrès international d'Études byzantines* (Paris, 1950), pp. 389-392 as quoted by Wilken, *Judaism* (n. 9). See also A. Vaccari, “La grecità di S. Cirillo d'Alessandria”, *Studi P. Ubaldi* (Milan, 1937), pp. 27-39.

<sup>52</sup> Hardy, “Cyrillus” (n. 27), p. 257 has a few lines on Cyril's style: “Kyrill schreibt unterschiedlich - präzise, weitschweifig oder schlicht, und dabei durchaus nicht ohne Reiz - für unterschiedliche Zielgruppen (...)”.

<sup>53</sup> *Johannes Chrysostomus, Acht Reden gegen Juden*, eingeleitet und erläutert von R. Brändle, übersetzt von V. Jegher-Bucher, Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur, 41 (Stuttgart, 1995), p. 38. Further: A.M. Ritter, “Erwägungen zum Antisemitismus in der Alten Kirche: Joannes Chrysostomos, ‘Acht Reden wider die Juden’”, *Bleibendes im Wandel der Kirchengeschichte: Kirchenhistorische Studien*, eds. B. Moeller and G. Ruhbach (Tübingen, 1973), pp. 71-91 and R.L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century* (Los Angeles - London, 1983). And on the legislation about the Jews from 383 to 438: M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule* (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 213-220 and more generally F. Millar, “The Jews of the Graeco-Roman diaspora between paganism and christianity, AD 312-438”, *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, eds. J. Lieu, J. North and T. Rajak (London - New York, 1992), pp. 97-123.

<sup>54</sup> e.g. M. Simon, *Vetus Israel: Étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et Juifs dans l'Empire Romain (135-435)* (Paris, 1964), p. 256: “le maître de l'imprécation anti-juive (...) Cet antisémitisme transparaît dans toute oeuvre”. Cyril of Alexandria is only mentioned

sharing the same feelings in Alexandria some 25 years later—surely a sign that in Alexandria too, Jewish rituals (as well as pagan ones) had not lost their appeal among the Christian population. The relationship between John's and Cyril's polemics should be investigated more closely.

There is no unanimity as to the exact year (414 or 415) of Cyril's expulsion of the Jews from Alexandria. It seems, however, that the first two Festal Letters allow us to fix the event in the later part (summer?) of the year 414.

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by Simon on p. 264 in connection with the expulsion of the Jews from Alexandria in 414: "le cas le plus net" of pogroms in early Christian times. H. Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld (1.-11. Jh.)*, Europäische Hochschulschriften, XXIII, 172 (Frankfurt am Main, 3d ed., 1995), p. 327 on John's sermons: "Da äussert sich in der Tat blanker Hass, und die Polarisierung von Christentum und Judentum erreicht einen Grad, der kaum noch steigerungsfähig erscheint." Schreckenberg's judgment on Cyril, p. 373: "Das antijüdische Verhalten des Erzbischofs, das zu dem ersten 'Pogrom' in der Geschichte der christlich-jüdischen Beziehungen führte, hat eine gewisse Entsprechung in den Aussagen zum Judenthema in seinen Schriften, doch vermeidet er gewöhnlich verbale Aggressionen in der Art des Johannes Chrysostomos." *Kirche und Synagoge: Handbuch zur Geschichte von Christen und Juden*, eds. K.H. Rengstorff and S. von Kortzfleisch, I (Stuttgart, 1968), pp. 170-180 and R.R. Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (London, 1975), pp. 158-165 do not deal with Cyril of Alexandria's anti-Judaism.

# EYXH DISTINGUÉ DE ΠΡΟΣΕΥXH: UN ESSAI DE PRÉCISION TERMINOLOGIQUE CHEZ LES PÈRES GRECS ET LES ÉCRIVAINS BYZANTINS<sup>1</sup>

P. Van Deun

Tout le monde sait que la prière joue un rôle très important dans l'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament, et cela vaut tant pour la prière spontanée que pour la prière qui part d'un texte fixé par la tradition. Un simple coup d'œil dans une concordance des *Septante* permet de constater que les notions εὐχή / εὐχομαι et προσευχή / προσεύχομαι s'équilibrent plus ou moins: on compte respectivement 176 et 216 attestations. Dans le Nouveau Testament, tout a changé: on n'y retrouve que dix fois εὐχή / εὐχομαι, tandis que προσευχή / προσεύχομαι a pris le dessus avec 123 loci.

Le couple εὐχή / εὐχομαι est plus ancien que les mots προσευχή / προσεύχομαι; il se retrouve déjà dans l'œuvre d'Homère<sup>2</sup>; chez le poète, la signification de base<sup>3</sup>, qui, selon la plupart des auteurs, est "exprimer quelque chose à haute voix, avec insistance, d'une manière solennelle", "prétendre quelque chose", sens que le grec a re-

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<sup>1</sup> Nous remercions Mr. Jacques Noret qui a bien voulu relire notre article. - Pour une introduction générale à la prière, tant païenne que paléo-chrétienne, consulter la discussion des mots εὐχομαι, εὐχή / προσεύχομαι, προσευχή dans le lexique de G. Kittel, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, II (Stuttgart, 1935), pp. 774-808 (les pp. 774-782 et 799-808 reviennent à H. Greeven, les pp. 782-799 à J. Herrmann), ainsi que la notice "Gebet I" d' E. von Severus, parue dans le RAC, VIII (Stuttgart, 1972), cc. 1134-1258.

<sup>2</sup> On y trouve ces mots à côté d'autres termes, tels εὐχολή, λίσσομαι, αἰτέω / αἰτέομαι, ἱκετεύω et προσκυνέω. Le développement de la prière dans l'Antiquité païenne a été esquissé dans le livre d' A. Corlu, *Recherches sur les mots relatifs à l'idée de prière, d'Homère aux tragiques* (Études et commentaires 64; Paris, 1966). Pour Homère, on citera également A.W.H. Adkins, "Εὐχομαι, εὐχολή and εὐχος", *The Classical Quarterly* N.S. 19 (1969), pp. 20-33, ainsi que l'article de J.-L. Perpillou, "La signification du verbe εὐχομαι dans l'épopée", dans *Mélanges de linguistique et de philologie grecques offerts à P. Chantraine* (Études et commentaires 79; Paris, 1972), pp. 169-82.

<sup>3</sup> On se dispute souvent sur la signification fondamentale du mot; ainsi, J.-L. Perpillou, "Signification...", pp. 169-82, dit, contre l'opinion commune, que le mot εὐχομαι signifie originalement "proclamer une juste prétention".

pris de l'indo-européen<sup>4</sup>, tend à se spécialiser dans le sens de “promettre quelque chose” et “demander quelque chose à haute voix dans une prière”, “prier pour quelque chose dans une situation d'urgence”<sup>5</sup>. On voit la richesse de nuances que peut véhiculer le mot εὐχή.

Plus tard, aux époques classique, hellénistique et romaine, on voit que, par la réflexion philosophique, la nuance “prier pour quelque chose dont on ne dispose pas encore actuellement” disparaît lentement en faveur de l'idée que la prière est un entretien personnel et intime avec un dieu sur quelque chose d'actuel; c'est un entretien où l'homme parle et où la divinité écoute. Dans la littérature chrétienne, mentionnons le témoignage de Clément d'Alexandrie qui développe cette idée d' ὁμιλία dans ses *Stromates*<sup>6</sup>, idée reprise par une longue série d'auteurs, tels Origène dans son *Traité sur la prière*<sup>7</sup>, Jean Cassien dans ses *Conlationes*<sup>8</sup>, Grégoire de Nysse dans son *De oratione dominica*<sup>9</sup>, Jean Chrysostome dans son commentaire sur la Genèse<sup>10</sup>,

<sup>4</sup> À ce propos, consulter l'article de Zs. Ritoók, “Εὐχομαι”, *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 3 (1955), pp. 287-99, mais surtout le livre d' A. Corlu, *Recherches...*, pp. 17-8, ainsi que le dictionnaire de P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque. Histoire des mots*, I (Paris, 1968), s.v. εὐχομαι, et la contribution de J.-L. Perpillou, “Signification...”, pp. 181-2.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. A. Corlu, *Recherches...*, pp. 207-15, qui, à l'intérieur de l' εὐχομαι, distingue six nuances: vœu-promesse, offrande votive, prière, vœu-souhait adressé aux dieux, souhait, vœu pieux.

<sup>6</sup> Lire par exemple *Strom.* 7, 39, 6 (ὁμιλία πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἢ εὐχή) et 7, 40, 3 (δι' εὐχῆς συνείναι μὲν σπεύδων θεῷ). Clément se rendant parfaitement compte du fait que ce contact intime avec Dieu pourrait choquer, il introduit ce passage avec les mots ὡς εἰπεῖν τολμηρότερον, “pour parler plus hardiment”. Sur la notion d' εὐχή comme entretien avec Dieu, voir l'article d' A. Méhat, “Sur deux définitions de la prière”, dans *Origeniana Sexta. Origène et la Bible. Actes du Colloquium Origenianum Sextum. Chantilly, 30 août - 3 septembre 1993* (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 118; Leuven, 1995), pp. 115-20: pour l'auteur, l'idée de la prière comme ὁμιλία est d'origine stoïcienne.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Origène, *De oratione* 9, 2 (p. 318, 26-32 et p. 319, 4-8 de l'édition de P. Koetschau, *Origenes Werke*, II, *Buch V-VIII gegen Celsus. Die Schrift vom Gebet*, GCS; Leipzig, 1899); on remarquera surtout le verbe ὁμιλεῖν (p. 318, 31) et les mots καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ γινομένη (p. 319, 6).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Conlationes*, IX, 18, p. 55, 7-9 de l'édition d' E. Pichery, *Jean Cassien. Conférences VIII-XVII* (SC 54; Paris, 1958): “... mens ... deo velut patri proprio peculiari pietate conloquitur.”

<sup>9</sup> *Homilia* I, p. 8, 30: Προσευχὴ θεοῦ ὁμιλία. Nous avons consulté l'œuvre (CPG 3160) dans l'édition de J. F. Callahan, *Gregorii Nysseni De oratione dominica, De beatitudinibus* (Gregorii Nysseni Opera VII, 2; Leiden - New York - Köln, 1992).

<sup>10</sup> Lire, à titre d' exemple, ses *Homiliae in Genesim*, PG 53, 280, 43: ‘Η ... εὐχὴ διάλεξις ἐστὶ πρὸς τὸν θεόν.

Nil d'Ancyre dans ses Lettres<sup>11</sup>, Évagre le Pontique dans son *De oratione*<sup>12</sup>, Jean Climaque dans sa *Scala Paradisi*<sup>13</sup> et le contemporain de ce dernier, Antiochos le moine dans ses *Pandectes*<sup>14</sup>, plus tard enfin, Théolepte, métropolite de Philadelphie au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>15</sup>.

Mais, au départ, la signification la plus courante d'εὐχή était cependant "demande", "prière pour recevoir quelque chose", "αἵτησις"; à titre de preuve, on pourrait citer ici Platon et Philon d'Alexandrie<sup>16</sup>. La Bible hébraïque ne contient aucun terme qui recouvre toutes les nuances des mots grecs εὐχή / εὐχομαι et des formes qui en dérivent; par contre, il y a beaucoup d'autres termes qui signifient "pleurer", "louer", "bénir", "sacrifier", "jubiler" et qui en même temps renferment la nuance de "prier"<sup>17</sup>. À partir d'Eschyle<sup>18</sup>,

<sup>11</sup> Pour Nil, nous n'avons exploité que ses lettres; en effet, on le sait, beaucoup d'autres œuvres qu'on attribuait jadis à Nil d'Ancyre, reviennent à d'autres auteurs, comme par ex. Évagre le Pontique. On retrouve la notion d'ὁμιλία notamment dans les Lettres I, 50, II, 96, III, 307 et IV, 25: PG 79, 105A7 (... συνομιλῆσαι αὐτῷ διὰ τῆς εὐχῆς), 244B12-14 (Ποῦ ἡ ἀπερίσπαστος τῶν εὐχῶν, καὶ ἀμέριμνος πρὸς θεὸν ὁμιλία;), 533C8-9 (... στήναι εἰς προσευχὴν, καὶ προσομιλεῖν τῷ τὰ πάντα κτίσαντι θεῷ ...) et 561B8-10 (... προσδιαλεγόμενοι δι' εὐχῆς ... τῷ τῶν ὅλων δεσπότῃ Χριστῷ). À ce propos, on consultera avec profit l'article de V. Warnach, "Zur Theologie des Gebetes bei Nilus von Ankyra", dans *Perennias. Beiträge zur christlichen Archäologie und Kunst, zur Geschichte der Literatur, der Liturgie und des Mönchtums sowie zur Philosophie des Rechts und zur politischen Philosophie. P. Th. Michels ... zum 70. Geburtstag* (Beiträge zur Geschichte des alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinerordens. Supplementband 2; Münster, 1963), pp. 65-90, plus particulièrement 85-90.

<sup>12</sup> En effet, la définition de Clément a été reprise - ou retrouvée - presque telle quelle par Évagre le Pontique dans son *De oratione*: PG 79, 1168C9 ('Η προσευχὴ ὁμιλία ἐστὶ νοῦ πρὸς Θεόν); à ce passage, on ajoutera également 1173D7-9 (... ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ· τί γὰρ ἀνώτερον τοῦ τῷ Θεῷ προσομιλεῖν, καὶ τῇ πρὸ [pour πρὸς] αὐτὸν συνουσίᾳ περισπᾶσθαι;).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. PG 88, 1129A8-9: Προσευχὴ ἐστὶ κατὰ μὲν τὴν αὐτῆς ποιότητα συνουσία καὶ ἔνωσης ἀνθρώπου καὶ Θεοῦ. À ce propos, voir également le livre de T. Špidlík, *La spiritualité de l'Orient Chrétien*, II, *La prière* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 230; Rome, 1988), p. 46.

<sup>14</sup> CPG 7843. Voir l'*homilia* CVI (*De oratione*), PG 89, 1756C9-10: 'Η γὰρ προσευχὴ ὁμιλία ἐστὶ πρὸς τὸν θεόν.

<sup>15</sup> Dans son ouvrage *De abscondita operatione in Christo et profectu in vita monastica* I, 17: Προσευχὴ δὲ ἐστὶ διαλογὴ διανοίας πρὸς κύριον, ῥήματα δεήσεως διανύουσα μετὰ τῆς τοῦ νοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὀλικῆς ἀτενίσεως (édition de R.E. Sinkewicz, *Theoleptos of Philadelphia. The Monastic Discourses*, Studies and Texts 111; Toronto, 1992, p. 96, l. 196-7).

<sup>16</sup> Voir Platon, *Leges* (801a9: εὐχαὶ παρὰ θεῶν αἰτήσεις εἰσίν); *Politikos* (290d1-2: παρὰ ... ἐκείνων ἡμῖν εὐχαῖς κτήσιν ἀγαθῶν αἰτήσασθαι); *Definitiones*, attribuées à tort à Platon, semble-t-il (415b2: εὐχὴ αἰτησις ἀνθρώποις ἀγαθῶν ... παρὰ θεῶν). Philon, *Deus immutabilis* (87: εὐχὴ μὲν αἰτησις ἀγαθῶν παρὰ θεοῦ).

<sup>17</sup> À ce propos, voir le lexique de G. Kittel, *Theologisches Wörterbuch...*, pp. 782-7, ainsi que la notice d' E. von Severus, "Gebet...", cc. 1162-9.

<sup>18</sup> Pour προσεύχομαι à l'époque classique, voir A. Corlu, *Recherches...*, pp. 234-40.

qui est le premier à utiliser la composition προσεύχομαι, nous trouvons quelquefois προσευχή / προσεύχομαι au lieu d' εὐχή / εὐχομαι; la fréquence de προσευχή / προσεύχομαι augmente sans cesse pour aboutir à une situation dans laquelle les mots εὐχή / εὐχομαι risquent de disparaître totalement: c'est le cas, nous l'avons dit, dans le Nouveau Testament. Cette disparition est peut-être due au fait que, pour les auteurs du Nouveau Testament, le couple εὐχή / εὐχομαι était trop lié à la religion païenne. Dans le texte des *Septante*, nous l'avons dit aussi, les deux couples sont attestés de manière assez équilibrée. Tant εὐχή que προσευχή y ont toutes les significations que ces mots avaient dans l'Antiquité païenne; ainsi, tant εὐχή que προσευχή peuvent désigner "prière", mais également "promesse" et "offrande"<sup>19</sup>. Dans le Nouveau Testament<sup>20</sup>, on ne peut pas découvrir de distinction claire entre εὐχή / εὐχομαι et προσευχή / προσεύχομαι; mais la différence semble résider dans le fait que l'εὐχή est presque toujours une prière concrète, une demande pour recevoir quelque chose<sup>21</sup>, tandis que la προσευχή désigne la prière en soi, la prière comme habitude, l'acte même de prier<sup>22</sup>, et même le lieu de la prière ou la réunion de prière<sup>23</sup>, plutôt qu'une demande particulière pour recevoir quelque chose<sup>24</sup>.

De plus, nulle part, ni dans l'Ancien, ni dans le Nouveau Testament, on n'aborde explicitement l'opposition entre εὐχή et προσευχή, même pas dans la première Épître à Timothée (2, 1), où S. Paul exhorte la communauté chrétienne d'Éphèse à faire des demandes (δεήσεις), des prières (προσευχαί), des requêtes (έντεύξεις) et des actions de grâces (εὐχαριστίαι) pour tous les hommes. Dans le passé,

<sup>19</sup> Pour l'utilisation d' εὐχή et de προσευχή dans les *Septante*, on consultera le lexique de J. Lust - E. Eynikel - K. Hauspie, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, I, A-I (Stuttgart, 1992), p. 191, s.v. εὐχή et εὐχομαι, et II, K-W (Stuttgart, 1996), p. 401, s.v. προσευχή et προσεύχομαι. Là, on retrouve une bibliographie succincte (à ce propos, voir surtout les études de M. Cimosà).

<sup>20</sup> À ce propos, voir G. Kittel, *Theologisches Wörterbuch...*, pp. 805-8, et E. von Severus, "Gebet...", cc. 1169-88, plus particulièrement cc. 1169-71.

<sup>21</sup> Lire par exemple Act. 21, 23 et 27, 29, et Iac. 5, 16.

<sup>22</sup> Lire par exemple Lc. 22, 45 ou Rom. 1, 10. Pour cette signification, voir F. Vattioni, "Appunti sulla vita primitiva cristiana", *Augustinianum* 9 (1969), pp. 455-9, ainsi que M. Hengel, "Proseuche und Synagoge. Jüdische Gemeinde, Gotteshaus und Gottesdienst in der Diaspora und in Palästina", dans *Tradition und Glaube. Festschrift K.G. Kuhn* (Göttingen, 1971), pp. 157-84.

<sup>23</sup> Lire par exemple Act. 16, 13 et 16.

<sup>24</sup> Par exemple Lc. 22, 42 ou II Thess. 1, 11. Dans le Nouveau Testament on trouve encore d'autres termes pour désigner la prière, tels αἰτέω, αἰτέομαι, δέομαι, προσκυνέω, γονυπετέω, εὐλογέω, εὐχαριστέω et αἰνέω.



beaucoup d'érudits ont voulu voir dans ce passage la trace d'une théorie sur la prière, l'accent semblant mis sur une division de la prière en quatre étapes. Aujourd'hui, tout le monde accepte que tel n'était pas le but de l'apôtre: en mentionnant ces quatre termes et en alignant plutôt de simples synonymes<sup>25</sup>, S. Paul a voulu énumérer tous les aspects de la prière chrétienne et affirmer l'unité de la prière, afin de promouvoir le bon déroulement du culte à Éphèse. Nous avons attiré l'attention sur ce passage, parce que quelques auteurs - et d'abord Origène - l'ont utilisé pour déterminer la distinction théorique entre εὐχή et προσευχή.

En fait, l'opposition explicite entre εὐχή et προσευχή est un thème assez rare dans la littérature des époques patristique et byzantine.

Sur ce point, l'*Expositio orationis dominicae* (CPG 7691) de Maxime le Confesseur (580-662) est certainement un des textes les plus importants. Cette œuvre, écrite probablement entre 628 et 630 en Afrique et éditée par nos soins en 1991<sup>26</sup>, est un ouvrage exégétique qui a connu beaucoup de succès: l'abondance des manuscrits (une quarantaine) et les nombreuses citations dans les chaînes, les florilèges et les auteurs byzantins en témoignent; extraordinairement synthétique, Maxime nous y laisse une sorte de somme de sa pensée théologique, qui, à la fois, rappelle encore les développements patristiques et annonce déjà ceux de l'époque byzantine; en effet, tous les thèmes chers à l'auteur y ont été intégrés: par exemple ses conceptions de la Trinité, de la christologie, de la cosmologie, de l'anthropologie, de la théorie de la connaissance, de l'ascèse enfin et de la mystique.

La plus grande partie du Prologue de ce commentaire est consacrée à une introduction générale à la Prière Dominicale: les demandes du *Pater* sont rattachées aux sept principaux mystères du salut: la

<sup>25</sup> Notons que ni les auteurs patristiques et byzantins, ni les commentaires bibliques modernes n'ont réussi à faire une distinction bien nette entre ces quatre notions pauliniennes. Prenons, à titre d'exemples, les commentaires modernes suivants: G. Wohlenberg, *Die Pastoralbriefe (der erste Timotheus-, der Titus- und der zweite Timotheusbrief)* (Kommentar zum Neuen Testament XIII; Leipzig, 1906), pp. 102-4; N. Brox, *Die Pastoralbriefe*. Vierte, völlig neu bearbeitete Auflage (Regensburger Neues Testament 7, 2; Regensburg, 1969), pp. 122-4; *The Expositor's Bible Commentary with the New International Version of the Holy Bible*, XI (*Ephesians - Philemon*) (Grand Rapids [Michigan], 1978), pp. 356-7; L. Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, erste Folge, *Kommentar zum ersten Timotheusbrief* (Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament XI, 2; Freiburg - Basel - Wien, 1994), pp. 64-8. À ce propos, on consultera également le livre de W. Gessel, *Die Theologie des Gebetes nach 'De Oratione' von Origenes* (München - Paderborn - Wien, 1975), p. 86.

<sup>26</sup> *Maximi Confessoris Opuscula exegetica duo* (CCSG 23; Turnhout - Leuven, 1991).

théologie, la filiation par grâce, l'égalité des hommes avec les anges, la participation à la vie éternelle, la restauration de la nature impassible renouvelée en profondeur, la libération de la loi du péché et la suppression de la tyrannie du mal (ou du Diable). Les deux premiers mystères correspondent à l'Évangile de Matthieu 6, 9-10a ("Notre Père qui es aux cieux, que ton nom soit sanctifié; que ton règne vienne"), le troisième à Mt. 6, 10b ("que ta volonté soit faite sur la terre comme au ciel"), le quatrième à Mt. 6, 11 ("Donne-nous aujourd'hui notre pain quotidien"), le cinquième à Mt. 6, 12 ("pardonne-nous nos offenses, comme nous aussi nous pardonnons à ceux qui nous ont offensés"), le sixième à Mt. 6, 13a ("ne nous induis pas en tentation") et le septième et dernier à Mt. 6, 13b ("mais délivre-nous du mal [*ou du Diable*]").

Après avoir exposé les sept mystères révélés dans la prière du Notre Père, Maxime insère un interlude terminologique avant d'aborder le commentaire proprement dit; pour cet intermède, il se base sur ce que des θεόπνευστοι πατέρες, des Pères inspirés par Dieu, ont dit sur ce sujet<sup>27</sup>. Ce passage se lit<sup>28</sup>:

(196) Διὰ τοῦτο προσευχήν, οἶμαι, ταύτην κέκληκε τὴν διδασκαλίαν ὁ λόγος, ὡς αἴτησιν ἔχουσιν τῶν ἀνθρώποις κατὰ χάριν ἐκ θεοῦ διδομένων δώρων· οὕτω γὰρ οἱ θεόπνευστοι πατέρες ἡμῶν ὀριστικῶς περὶ τῆς προσευχῆς (200) διεξήλθον, φήσαντες εἶναι τὴν προσευχήν αἴτησιν ὧν θεὸς πρεπόντως ἐαυτῷ δωρεῖσθαι πέφυκεν ἀνθρώποις, ὥσπερ καὶ τὴν εὐχήν ὑπόσχεσιν ἡγουν ἐπαγγελίαν ὧν γνησίως λατρεύοντες θεῷ προσκομίζουσιν ἄνθρωποι, τὴν Γραφὴν μαρτυροῦσαν τῷ οἰκείῳ λόγῳ πολλαχῶς (205) παραστήσαντες, ὡς τὸ Εὐξασθε καὶ ἀπόδοτε κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν καὶ Ὅσα ἡξάμην, ἀποδώσω σοι σωτήρί μου τῷ κυρίῳ περὶ τῆς εὐχῆς εἰρημένον, καὶ αὐτὸς περὶ προσευχῆς, ὡς τὸ Καὶ προσηύξατο Ἀννα πρὸς κύριον λέγουσα· «Κύριε, Ἄδωναϊ, Ἐλῶϊ Σαβαώθ, ἐὰν (210) εἰσακούσῃς τῆς δούλης σου καὶ δῶς μοι καρπὸν κοιλίας» καὶ Προσηύξατο Ἐζεκίας βασιλεὺς Ἰούδα καὶ Ἡσαΐας υἱὸς Ἀμώς ὁ προφήτης πρὸς κύριον καὶ τὸ Ὅταν ὑμεῖς προσεύχησθε, λέγετε· «Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς» παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου τοῖς μαθηταῖς (215) εἰρημένον, ὡς εἶναι δύνασθαι τὴν μὲν εὐχήν ἐντολῶν τήρησιν, κατὰ γνώμην πράξει τοῦ ἡγμένου κεκυρωμένην, τὴν δὲ προσευχήν τῆς πρὸς τὰ ῥηθέντα καλὰ τοῦ τετηρηκότος μεταποιήσεως αἴτησιν, ἢ μᾶλλον, τὴν μὲν εὐχήν ἀρετῆς ἄθλον, ὃ δὴ μάλιστα προσφιλῶς δέχεται θεὸς (220) προσκομιζόμενον, τὴν δὲ προσευχήν ἀρετῆς ἔπαθλον, ὃ δὴ μάλιστα χαίρων θεὸς ἀντιδίδωσιν.

<sup>27</sup> Voir la ligne 199 de ce texte remarquable.

<sup>28</sup> Il s'agit des lignes 196-226 de notre édition (pp. 38-40).

Οὐκοῦν, ἐπειδὴ δέδεικται τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ Λόγου σαρκωθέντος αὐτουργηθέντων ἀγαθῶν αἴτησιν εἶναι τὴν προσευχήν, αὐτὸν προστησάμενοι τοῦ λόγου τῆς προσευχῆς (225) τὸν διδάσκαλον, θαρροῦντες ἐπέλθωμεν, ἐπιμελῶς ἐκάστου ῥητοῦ γυμνάζοντες, ὡς οἶόν τε, θεωρίᾳ τὴν ἔννοιαν.

L'Écriture, je pense, a appelé *προσευχή* cet enseignement, pour le motif qu'il comporte la demande des dons que Dieu donne aux hommes par grâce. C'est ainsi en effet que nos Pères inspirés par Dieu ont expliqué et défini la *προσευχή*, disant que la *προσευχή* est une demande des dons que Dieu, conformément à ce qu'il est, a l'habitude de donner aux hommes; de même qu'ils ont défini l' *εὐχή* comme un engagement ou une promesse de ce qu'apportent à Dieu les hommes qui lui rendent le culte authentique. Il ont fréquemment montré que l'Écriture témoigne en faveur de leur exégèse, comme: 'Faites des vœux et des offrandes au Seigneur notre Dieu' (Ps. 75, 12) et 'Tout ce dont j'ai fait vœu, je t'en ferai offrande, Seigneur mon Sauveur' (Ion. 2, 10 et Od. 6, 10). Voilà qui est dit pour l' *εὐχή*; et pour la *προσευχή*: 'Anne pria disant au Seigneur: «Seigneur Adonai, Éloï Sabaoth, si tu daignes exaucer ta servante et donner un fruit à mes entrailles»' (I Reg. 1, 10-11 et Gen. 30, 2 ou Ps. 131, 11 ou Lam. 2, 20 ou Mich. 6, 7 ou Lc. 1, 42), et 'Ézéchiass, roi de Juda, ainsi que le prophète Isaïe, fils d'Amos, prièrent vers le Seigneur' (II Par. 32, 20 et 24), et aussi ce que dit le Seigneur à ses disciples: 'Quand vous priez, dites: «Notre Père qui es aux cieux»' (Lc. 11, 2). Ainsi l' *εὐχή* peut être le fait de garder les commandements dans sa volonté, ratifié par l'exécution de ce qui a fait l'objet de l' *εὐχή*; et la *προσευχή*, une demande que soit changé celui qui a gardé (les commandements) conformément aux biens promis; ou mieux, l' *εὐχή*, c'est le combat de la vertu, offrande que Dieu accepte avec la plus grande bienveillance, et la *προσευχή*, la récompense de la vertu, que Dieu donne en échange avec la plus grande joie.

Puisque nous avons donc fait voir que la *προσευχή* est une demande des bienfaits réalisés par le Verbe incarné, mettant notre exposé sous la protection du Maître même, avançons avec confiance, mettant soigneusement à nu par la contemplation, autant que possible, le sens de chaque mot.

Comme Origène, mais moins souvent il est vrai, Maxime approfondit les questions de sémantique, de grammaire ou de style qui surgissent à l'occasion de certains passages bibliques; ces développements deviennent ainsi le point de départ pour des spéculations théologiques et spirituelles<sup>29</sup>. L'opposition explicite qu'il fait entre l' *εὐχή* et la *προσευχή*, en est un bel exemple.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. P.M. Blowers, *Exegesis and Spiritual Pedagogy in Maximus the Confessor. An Investigation of the Quaestiones ad Thalassium* (Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 7; Notre Dame [Indiana], 1991), pp. 219-21.

Parce que, dans les paroles qui introduisent le Notre Père (cf. Mt. 6, 5-7 et 9), le Christ n'utilise que le verbe προσεύχομαι, Maxime<sup>30</sup> ne se sert que des mots προσεύχομαι et προσευχή, et évite ici εὐχομαι et εὐχή qui, dit-il, désignent plutôt un vœu ou une promesse.

Au départ se situe l'εὐχή: on s'engage envers Dieu à garder les commandements, à lutter pour la vertu et à consacrer pieusement sa vie à Dieu notre Seigneur; si on se tient à cet engagement, on obtient la liberté de parole, la παρρησία devant Dieu; c'est seulement à ce moment qu'on peut s'adresser à Dieu dans une προσευχή, dans une prière, et lui demander certains biens comme ἀντίδωρα (dons en retour) pour la vie vertueuse qu'on a menée<sup>31</sup>. Ainsi, Maxime souligne que l'εὐχή et la προσευχή jouent un rôle important dans l'ascension spirituelle de l'homme et dans l'orientation chrétienne d'une vie.

Bien que Maxime ait repris ce chapitre terminologique à ce que des prédécesseurs avaient déjà dit à ce sujet, comme nous le montrons, le passage s'intègre très bien dans son commentaire sur le Notre Père, car cette prière, dit Maxime dans ce qui suit, exige un changement de vie radical de tous ceux qui veulent prier sincèrement<sup>32</sup>.

Comment a-t-il défini les expressions εὐχή et προσευχή? Dans la première partie du passage cité, il identifie l'εὐχή avec un engagement, une promesse, une ὑπόσχεσις ἡγουν ἐπαγγελία ὧν γνησίως λατρεύοντες θεῷ προσκομίζουσιν ἄνθρωποι (ll. 202-203 du texte), tandis que la προσευχή est définie comme une demande des dons divins, une αἴτησις τῶν ἀνθρώποις κατὰ χάριν ἐκ θεοῦ διδομένων δώρων (ll. 197-198), une définition reprise aux lignes 200-201 (... αἴτησιν ὧν θεὸς πρεπόντως ἑαυτῷ δωρεῖσθαι πέφυκεν ἀνθρώποις ...). Maxime essaie d'étayer cette distinction à l'aide d'un certain nombre de passages bibliques.

Dans la seconde partie du texte, Maxime essaie encore par deux fois de définir de manière plus précise les deux notions, sans oublier toutefois leur lien mutuel; l'εὐχή est pour lui le fait de garder les

<sup>30</sup> Pour la notion maximienne de la prière, voir l'excellent ouvrage de W. Völker, *Maximus Confessor als Meister des geistlichen Lebens* (Wiesbaden, 1965), pp. 450-60.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Völker, *Maximus Confessor...*, pp. 450-2.

<sup>32</sup> À ce sujet, voir la thèse de J.N. Madden, *Christology and Anthropology in the Spirituality of Maximus the Confessor. With special reference to the Expositio Orationis Dominicæ* (Durham, 1982), p. 493. Dans les actes du Colloque centré sur S. Maxime (1980), le même auteur avait mis en valeur la structure bien réfléchie de cette œuvre, "The Commentary on the Pater Noster: an Example of the Structural Methodology of Maximus the Confessor", dans *Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur. Fribourg, 2-5 septembre 1980* (Paradosis. Études de littérature et de théologie anciennes 27; Fribourg, 1982), pp. 147-55.

commandements, ratifié par l'exécution de ce qui a fait l'objet de l'εὐχή, l'έντολῶν τήρησις κατὰ γνώμην, πράξει τοῦ ηὔγμενου κεκυρωμένη (ll. 215-216); la προσευχή par contre est une demande pour acquérir les biens promis (ll. 216-218). Finalement, l'εὐχή est caractérisée comme la lutte pour la vertu (l'ἀρετῆς ἄθλον, ὃ δὴ μάλιστα προσφιλῶς δέχεται θεὸς προσκομιζόμενον, ll. 218-220) et la προσευχή comme une récompense pour cette lutte pour la vertu, une récompense que l'homme reçoit comme un don en retour (l'ἀρετῆς ἔπαθλον, ὃ δὴ μάλιστα χαίρων θεὸς ἀντιδίδωσιν, ll. 220-221).

Comme on a pu le constater, Maxime appuie sa distinction entre l'εὐχή et la προσευχή sur plusieurs passages bibliques, dont un bon nombre se lisent également chez d'autres auteurs. Remarquons seulement que les ll. 208-211, où le Confesseur cite le premier livre des Rois (1, 10-11), ont été mal choisies comme exemple de la προσευχή. En effet, comme l'a déjà remarqué François Combefis, qui a établi l'édition princeps du texte<sup>33</sup>, les mots cités en I Reg. 1, 11 ne vont pas avec le προσήυξατο du verset 10, mais, au contraire, avec les mots ηὔξατο εὐχὴν du verset 11; ce passage biblique a donc mal été choisi pour appuyer la distinction que veut promouvoir Maxime.

Une distinction similaire entre l'εὐχή et la προσευχή se lit également ailleurs chez S. Maxime, par ex.<sup>34</sup>, dans la cinquantième, particulièrement importante des *Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, œuvre probablement rédigée en Afrique entre les années 630 et 634 et construite selon le principe bien connu des questions et réponses; dans la *quaestio* qui nous concerne ici, Maxime réfléchit sur le passage biblique dans lequel le roi Ezéchias et le prophète Isaïe prient et clament vers le ciel (II Par. 32, 20-21). Aux lignes 87-93, on lit le texte suivant qui est très proche de celui de l'*Expositio orationis dominicae*:

<sup>33</sup> S. Maximi Confessoris, *Graecorum theologi eximiiue philosophi, operum tomus primus (secundus) ex probatissimis quaeque mss. codicibus, Regius, Card. Mazarini, Seguerianis, Vaticanis, Barberinis, Magni Ducis Florentinis, Venetis, etc., nova Versione subacta, Notisque illustrata*, I (Paris, 1675), p. 695 n. 8. Repris comme la note h dans la PG 90, 881-2.

<sup>34</sup> De Maxime, on pourrait citer encore: *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* XXV, 81-82 (... προσευχόμενος ... τούτέστι τῶν ἀρετῶν ἐξαιτούμενος λόγους), XXV, *schol.* 54-55 (Προσευχὴν ... τὴν τῶν ἀρετῶν αἴτησιν), deux passages qui révèlent la signification de la προσευχή, et LVII, 10-14 (... εὐχῆς γὰρ καὶ δεήσεως ὑπόστασις ἢ διὰ τῶν ἀρετῶν ὑπάρχει προδήλως ἐκπλήρωσις, καθ' ἣν ἰσχυρὰν καὶ πάντα δυναμένην ὁ δίκαιος ἔχει τὴν δεήσιν, ἐνεργουμένην ταῖς ἐντολαῖς ...), un passage qui traite de l'εὐχή. Nous avons consulté cet ouvrage dans l'édition de C. Laga - C. Steel, *Maximi Confessoris Quaestiones ad Thalassium*, I et II (CCSG 7 et 22; Turnhout - Leuven, 1980 et 1990).

Προσευχὴ δέ ἐστιν αἴτησις ὧν πέφυκε θεὸς ἀνθρώποις δωρεῖσθαι πρὸς σωτηρίαν. Καὶ μάλᾳ γε εἰκότως. Εἰ γὰρ εὐχή ἐστιν ὑπόσχεσις τῶν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων θεῷ κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν προσαγομένων καλῶν, προσευχή κατὰ τὸν εἰκότα λόγον ἔσται σαφῶς ἢ τῶν ἐκ θεοῦ πρὸς σωτηρίαν χορηγομένων τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀγαθῶν ἐξαίτησις, ἀντίδοσιν φέρουσα τῆς τῶν προηγουμένων καλῆς διαθέσεως.

La προσευχή est une demande des choses que Dieu a l'habitude d'offrir aux hommes pour leur salut; et à très juste titre, car si l' εὐχή est la promesse de ces dons que les hommes offrent à Dieu sur base d'un engagement, la προσευχή très normalement, sera clairement la demande des biens que Dieu accorde aux hommes pour leur salut, une demande entraînant un don en retour pour la bonne attitude de vie de ceux qui auparavant ont fait une εὐχή.

Examinons maintenant sur quels θεόπνευστοι πατέρες, sur quelles sources S. Maxime s'est basé.

Maxime s'est clairement inspiré du traité d'Origène sur la prière. En 233-234, Origène reçut, probablement à Césarée, une lettre d'un ancien élève, ami et mécène; celui-ci, qui s'appelait Ambroise, lui demandait, également au nom d'une certaine Tatiana, de donner son opinion sur le problème suivant: est-ce que prier a encore un sens, puisque Dieu connaît déjà tous nos besoins et désirs et que tout est prédestiné par Lui depuis l'éternité? Ayant rejeté cette thèse, Origène approfondit l'origine, la forme et le contenu de la prière en général, et du Notre Père en particulier<sup>35</sup>.

Suivant les bonnes habitudes philologiques qui faisaient le renom d'Alexandrie, Origène commence son traité par un chapitre terminologique<sup>36</sup>. Immédiatement, il pose que l' εὐχή et la προσευχή sont deux choses différentes<sup>37</sup>.

Dans le chapitre 3, 2-4<sup>38</sup>, il traite de la signification profane du mot εὐχή. Il constate que ce terme peut signifier aussi bien "promesse"<sup>39</sup> que "prière", "demande pour obtenir quelque chose", deux significations qu'on rencontre d'ailleurs aussi dans le Nouveau Testament,

<sup>35</sup> Pour Origène, la prière occupe une place centrale dans la religion, alors que Clément d'Alexandrie considérait la prière comme étant une manière d'atteindre la γνώσις, la connaissance qui procure le salut.

<sup>36</sup> Ce passage terminologique a été étudié à fond par W. Gessel, *Die Theologie des Gebetes...*, pp. 85-104. Voir également E. von Severus, "Gebet...", cc. 1217-9 et 1235-8.

<sup>37</sup> *De oratione* 3, 2, p. 304, 17: (τῆς εὐχῆς) πολλαχοῦ ἐτέρας παρὰ τὴν προσευχήν.

<sup>38</sup> P. 304, 16 - p. 307, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. 3, 2, p. 304, 16-18: ... τὸ ὄνομα τῆς εὐχῆς παρελήφθη ... ἐπὶ τοῦ μετὰ εὐχῆς ἐπαγγελλομένου τάδε τινὰ ποιήσιν, εἰ τύχοι ἀπὸ θεοῦ τῶνδε.

mais qui ne peuvent pas toujours être bien distinguées l'une de l'autre, dit Origène; comme preuve de ce sens ambigu du mot et de l'usage souvent peu exact qu'on fait d' *εὐχή*, Origène cite un bon nombre de passages bibliques<sup>40</sup>. Toujours selon Origène, de son temps, le mot était encore employé dans les deux sens.

Puis, dans le quatrième chapitre, 1-2<sup>41</sup>, il examine l'évolution de l' *εὐχή* jusqu'à la *προσευχή*. Le mot *προσευχή* reçoit, à côté de sa signification courante de "prière", "demande pour quelque chose", aussi celle de "promesse"<sup>42</sup>. Pour Origène donc, tant l' *εὐχή* que la *προσευχή* ont un double sens<sup>43</sup>; une distinction nette entre ces deux mots n'est pas possible, lorsqu'on examine leur usage dans les textes<sup>44</sup>. Mais, Origène plaide pour un usage univoque et propose de n'utiliser désormais le mot *προσευχή* que pour exprimer la notion de "prière", "demande pour quelque chose" et le mot *εὐχή* que pour désigner "un vœu", "une promesse".

Remarquons encore qu'Origène cite ici le passage de la première Épître à Timothée déjà mentionné (2, 1)<sup>45</sup>; il se base sur ce texte pour distinguer quatre formes de la prière<sup>46</sup>; mais cette division et définition précise des quatre formes n'est pas tâche facile, Origène le sait<sup>47</sup>; chaque forme est appuyée par des passages bibliques<sup>48</sup>, qui, très souvent, ne montrent pas clairement la différence entre les quatre mots<sup>49</sup>. Origène a donc assez mal réussi, lui aussi, dans son essai pour

<sup>40</sup> Ces passages proviennent presque tous de l'Ancien Testament, plus particulièrement de l'Exode (surtout le chapitre 8, 8).

<sup>41</sup> P. 307, 4 - p. 308, 2.

<sup>42</sup> P. 307, 6-9.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. 4, 1, p. 307, 5-6: τῆς εὐχῆς δύο σημαίνουσας, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τῆς προσευχῆς.

<sup>44</sup> Ce qui ressort d'ailleurs également lorsqu'on examine les lemmes *εὐχή* et *προσευχή* dans le dictionnaire de Lampe.

<sup>45</sup> *De oratione* 14, 2-6, p. 330, 21 - p. 333, 25, pour la citation, voir plus particulièrement 14, 2, p. 331, 2-4.

<sup>46</sup> Il est remarquable qu'il ne cite ici que ce verset unique de S. Paul (il termine sa citation avec les mots καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς) et qu'il ne fait aucune attention à la motivation de l'appel de I Tim. 2, 1, motivation qui ne suit que dans le deuxième verset du deuxième chapitre; il ne se concentre pas sur la signification profonde de ce lieu biblique (S. Paul affirme l'unité de la prière chrétienne, destinée à tout le monde).

<sup>47</sup> Origène se rend compte de cette difficulté, car il introduit ce qu'il dit, avec les mots "je pense" (14, 2, p. 331, 4: ἡγοῦμαι...); par ailleurs, en d'autres endroits, il ne se tient pas aux définitions strictes d' *εὐχή* et de *προσευχή*.

<sup>48</sup> Pris tant à l'Ancien Testament qu'au Nouveau Testament.

<sup>49</sup> Pour la δέησις, il s'agit d'Ex. 32, 11, de Deut. 9, 18 et d'Esth. 4, 17; pour la *προσευχή*, il renvoie à Dan. 3, 24, à Tob. 3, 1-2, à I Reg. 1, 10-11, à Hab. 3, 1-2 et à Ion. 2, 2-4; pour l' *ἐντευξις*, il cite Ios. 10, 12 et Iudic. 16, 30; pour l' *εὐχαριστία*, il utilise Mt. 11, 25 et Lc. 10, 21.

distinguer les quatre subdivisions de la prière: les mots restent en quelque sorte des synonymes.

Contrairement à d'autres auteurs postérieurs, comme Évagre le Pontique ou le Pseudo-Denys, Origène n'absolutise pas l'échellonage de la prière, ni ne l'accentue excessivement, du moins si on peut en croire la plupart des spécialistes d'Origène<sup>50</sup>.

À Césarée, en Palestine, la doctrine d'Origène passe notamment à Eusèbe. Il n'y a donc rien d'étonnant à ce que ce dernier aussi oppose εὐχή et προσευχή; en effet, dans son commentaire sur le Psaume 64, verset 3 ("εἰσάκουσον προσευχῆς μου"), il écrit:

'Ακριβῶς δ' ἐνταῦθα προσευχῆς, ἀλλ' οὐκ εὐχῆς εἴρηται· ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἐπαγγελίαν ἐδήλου, ἡ δὲ προσευχή δέησιν καὶ ἱκετηρίαν, ἣν τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐποιεῖτο, πρέπουσαν ἱκετηρίαν προσαγαγὸν τῷ θεῷ καὶ λέγον "εἰσάκουσον προσευχῆς"<sup>51</sup>.

Ici on dit correctement προσευχή, et non εὐχή en effet, ce dernier mot signifie 'promesse', προσευχή, par contre, 'demande' et 'supplication', ce que le Saint Esprit faisait pour nous, offrant à Dieu une supplication appropriée et disant: 'Exauce la προσευχή'.

L'opposition terminologique entre εὐχή et προσευχή a également été développée dans la deuxième homélie sur le Notre Père de Grégoire de Nysse<sup>52</sup>. L'εὐχή est pour lui une ἐπαγγελία τινὸς τῶν κατ'εὐσέβειαν ἀφιερουμένων<sup>53</sup> ou une χαριστήριος δωροφορίας ἐπαγγελία<sup>54</sup>, tandis qu'il définit la προσευχή comme une αἴτησις ἀγαθῶν μετὰ ἱκετηρίας προσαγομένη θεῷ<sup>55</sup> ou comme une πρόσδοδος μετὰ τὴν ἐκπλήρωσιν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ θεῷ γινομένη<sup>56</sup>. C'est pour

<sup>50</sup> W. Völker, *Das Vollkommenheitsideal des Origenes. Eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte der Frömmigkeit und zu den Anfängen christlicher Mystik* (Beiträge zur historischen Theologie 7; Tübingen, 1931), pp. 202-15, est un défenseur de la thèse des quatre étapes dans la prière (à l'intérieur de la prière, on va de la δέησις, par intermédiaire de la προσευχή, à l'εὐχαριστία). H. Koch, "Kennt Origenes Gebetsstufen?", *Theologische Quartalschrift* 87 (1905), pp. 592-6, est un des premiers d'avoir vu le problème (selon cet érudit, on trouve chez Origène un début, modeste il est vrai, d'une gradation dans la prière); W. Gessel, *Theologie des Gebetes...*, pp. 91-104, par contre, a nié, sur base d'arguments convaincants me semble-t-il, l'existence d'étapes successives à l'intérieur de la prière.

<sup>51</sup> PG 23, 628B12-C2. Le commentaire sur les Psaumes d'Eusèbe est répertorié dans la CPG sous le numéro 3467.

<sup>52</sup> P. 21, 15 - p. 22, 15 (dans l'édition critique de J. F. Callahan). Pour le rôle que joue la prière dans la théologie de Grégoire, consulter le livre de W. Völker, *Gregor von Nyssa als Mystiker* (Wiesbaden, 1955), pp. 264-6.

<sup>53</sup> Voir la p. 21, 20-21.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. p. 22, 4

<sup>55</sup> Cf. p. 21, 21-22.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. p. 22, 5-6.



cela, dit Grégoire, que les évangélistes Matthieu et Luc (respectivement 6, 9 et 11, 2) ont employé le mot *προσεύχομαι* pour introduire le *Πάτερ ἡμῶν*, une pensée qu'on retrouvera, on le sait déjà, chez Maxime le Confesseur.

Dans le même passage, Grégoire, tout comme Maxime, souligne que l' *εὐχομαι* précède le *προσεύχομαι* en effet, avant qu'on puisse s'adresser à Dieu dans une *προσευχή*, on doit, par l' *εὐχή* s'engager dans une vie pieuse<sup>57</sup>.

Remarquons enfin que la même opposition entre *εὐχή* et *προσευχή* se lit également dans l'introduction aux Psaumes, attribuée à Hippolyte (CPG 1882); il s'agit en fait d'une compilation tardive contenant des fragments d'auteurs divers. On y lit: *ἔστι δὲ προσευχή ἱκετηρία περί τινος τῶν συμφερόντων προσαγομένη τῷ θεῷ, εὐχή δὲ ὑπόσχεσις*<sup>58</sup>. Ce passage s'inspire manifestement de ce que d'autres auteurs (par exemple Grégoire de Nysse) ont dit.

La même définition de la *προσευχή* se rencontre encore ailleurs, sans qu'aucune allusion soit faite au mot *εὐχή*. Tel est le cas, d'abord, dans l'œuvre de cet autre grand Père cappadocien qu'est Basile de Césarée. Dans son homélie dédiée à la martyre Julitte, à propos d'un passage de la première Épître aux Thessaloniens, il écrit: *Προσευχή ἐστὶν αἴτησις ἀγαθοῦ παρὰ τῶν εὐσεβῶν εἰς θεὸν γινομένη*<sup>59</sup>. Il en va

<sup>57</sup> À ce sujet, lire, dans le même ouvrage, p. 21, 17-19 (*Οὐκ εἶπεν, “Ὅταν εὐχῇσθε, ἀλλ’, “Ὅταν προσεύχησθε, ὡς τοῦ κατὰ τὴν εὐχὴν ἤδη προκατορθωθῆναι προσήκοντος πρὶν διὰ τῆς προσευχῆς τῷ θεῷ προσεγγίσει*), p. 21, 22-26 (*ἐπεὶ οὖν παρρησίας ἡμῖν χρεια ὅταν προσίωμεν θεῷ τὰς ὑπὲρ τῶν λυσιτελοῦντων ἱκετηρίας ποιοῦμενοι, ἀναγκαίως τὸ κατὰ τὴν εὐχὴν προηγήσεται ἵνα τὸ παρ’ ἐαυτῶν ἐκτελέσαντες οὕτως θαρσύνετε τὸ παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀντλαβεῖν ἀξιώσωμεν*) et p. 22, 6-15 (*διδάσκει οὖν ἡμᾶς ὁ λόγος μὴ πρότερον αἰτεῖσθαι τι παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ πρὶν αὐτῷ τι τῶν κεχαρισμένων δωροφορῆσαι. Εὐξασθαι γὰρ δεῖ πρότερον, εἶτα προσεύξασθαι, ὡς εἴ τις λέγοι προηγείσθαι τὴν σποράν τῆς ἐπικαρπίας. Οὐκοῦν χρὴ καταβαλεῖν πρότερον τῆς εὐχῆς τὰ σπέρματα καὶ οὕτως αὐξηθεῖσαν τὴν καταβολὴν τῶν σπερμάτων καρπώσασθαι διὰ τῆς προσευχῆς τὴν χάριν ἀντλαμβάνοντα. Ὡς οὖν οὐκ ἐσομένης ἐν παρρησίᾳ τῆς ἐντεύξεως εἰ μὴ ἐπὶ προληφθείσῃ εὐχῇ πινὶ καὶ δωροφορίᾳ ἢ πρόσοδος γένοιτο, ἀναγκαίως ἡ εὐχή τῆς προσευχῆς προηγήσεται*). Remarquons que Grégoire cite ici, tout comme Maxime, le Psaume 75, 12 (p. 22, 1). Dans d'autres œuvres également, on retrouve la même pensée; voir par exemple son *In inscriptiones psalmorum* II, 3, p. 76, 19-22 dans l'édition de J. Mc Donough et P. Alexander, *Gregorii Nysseni In inscriptiones psalmorum, In sextum psalmum, In Ecclesiasten homiliae* (Gregorii Nysseni Opera V; Leiden, 1962): ... ἡ ... προσευχή ... ὑποτίθεται πρότερον περὶ τὸν βίον σπουδάζειν ... καὶ τότε προσίειναι διὰ προσευχῆς τῷ θεῷ.

<sup>58</sup> CPG 1882. Cf. H. Achelis, *Hippolyt's kleinere exegetische und homiletische Schriften* (GCS; Leipzig, 1897), fragment XVI (p. 144, 16-17).

<sup>59</sup> PG 31, 244A4-5 (CPG 2849). À ce propos, consulter le livre de T. Špidlik, *La spiritualité...*, p. 47.

de même pour un autre contemporain de Grégoire de Nysse et de Basile, Didyme l'Aveugle. Dans son célèbre commentaire des Psaumes conservé sur papyrus, on lit, à plusieurs reprises, la définition de la προσευχή comme une αἴτησις ἀγαθῶν παρὰ θεοῦ<sup>60</sup>. Pour ce qui est de l' εὐχή, on retrouve sa définition, isolée, chez Évagre le Pontique, dont on sait qu'il a beaucoup influencé la spiritualité et le vocabulaire technique de S. Maxime<sup>61</sup>. Dans ses *Capita gnostica* on lit que l' εὐχή est "une promesse de biens provenant d'un bon choix de la volonté"<sup>62</sup>.

Comme sources de S. Maxime, on pourrait également citer deux commentaires sur l'Ecclésiaste, rédigés au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Dans les commentaires de ce livre, on trouve en effet parfois, à propos du chapitre 5, versets 3-4, l'opposition entre εὐχή et προσευχή.

Le premier est celui d'Olympiodore, qui fut diacre de l'Église d'Alexandrie au début du VI<sup>e</sup> siècle; en réalité, ce commentaire se présente plutôt comme une sorte de chaîne où sont cités de nom-

<sup>60</sup> À propos du Psaume 33, 2 (CPG 2550): cf. *Didymos der Blinde. Psalmenkommentar (Tura-Papyrus)*, Teil III: *Kommentar zu Psalm 29-34 in Verbindung mit A. Gesché* herausgegeben und übersetzt von M. Gronewald (Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen 8; Bonn, 1969), 189, 8-9 (p. 222). On lit un texte identique dans son commentaire sur le Psaume 34, 13, en 213, 7-8 (p. 346 du même volume); une pensée similaire se lit à l'occasion du Psaume 38, 13, en 279, 29-33 (p. 252 d'un autre volume, *Didymos der Blinde. Psalmenkommentar (Tura-Papyrus)*, Teil IV, *Kommentar zu Psalm 35-39* herausgegeben und übersetzt von M. Gronewald [Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen 6; Bonn, 1969]).

<sup>61</sup> À ce sujet, on consultera par exemple: M. Viller, "Aux sources de la spiritualité de S. Maxime. Les œuvres d'Évagre le Pontique", *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 11 (1930), pp. 156-84, 239-68 et 331-6, plus particulièrement 250-4 (chez Maxime, cet auteur voit partout l'influence d'Évagre); I.-H. Dalmais, "L'héritage évagrien dans la synthèse de saint Maxime le Confesseur", dans *SP VIII* (TU 93; Berlin, 1966), pp. 356-62 (Dalmais a nuancé la thèse de Viller); Griet Van der Hertten, *De taal van Evagrius Ponticus en Maximus Confessor. Lexicografische en stilistische vergelijking van 'De oratione' met 'De caritate'*, (Leuven, 1984); G.C. Berthold, "History and Exegesis in Evagrius and Maximus", dans *Origeniana Quarta. Die Referate des 4. Internationalen Origeneskongresses (Innsbruck, 2.-6. September 1985)* (Innsbrucker theologische Studien 19; Innsbruck - Wien, 1987), pp. 390-404.

<sup>62</sup> CPG 2432. Cf. W. Frankenberg, *Euagrius Ponticus* (Abhandlungen der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen. Philologisch-historische Klasse, Neue Folge, XIII, 2; Berlin, 1912), p. 455, n° 32: Εὐχή ἐστὶν ἐπαγγελία ἀγαθῶν ἀγαθῇ προαιρέσει γενομένη. On sait que les *Capita gnostica*, abstraction faite de quelques fragments, n'ont été conservés qu'en syriaque, en arménien et en arabe; la définition grecque de l' εὐχή, est donc ici le résultat d'une rétroversion à partir du syriaque. Il est toutefois remarquable que dans le célèbre traité évagrien sur la prière, on ne retrouve pas les deux définitions connues, ni celle de l' εὐχή ni celle de la προσευχή.

breux auteurs plus anciens. On y lit: Προσευχή ἐστὶν αἵτησις ἀγαθῶν παρὰ θεοῦ, εὐχή δὲ ἡ ἐπαγγελία<sup>63</sup>.

Très proche de ce commentaire d'Olympiodore<sup>64</sup>, est la chaîne conservée dans le manuscrit *Vaticanus, Barberinianus gr. 388*, du XIII<sup>e</sup>-XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>65</sup>. Dans ce texte caténique<sup>66</sup>, on trouve des scholies provenant d'œuvres d'Origène, de Grégoire le Thaumaturge, de Grégoire de Nysse, de Nil d'Ancyre et surtout d'Olympiodore. On ne s'étonnera donc pas d'y lire la distinction entre l'εὐχή et la προσευχή qu'on a déjà avancée pour Olympiodore<sup>67</sup>.

Ayant ainsi examiné les sources du passage terminologique de S. Maxime, voyons maintenant si l'antithèse εὐχή - προσευχή ou la définition connue d'un des deux mots s'est perpétuée à l'époque byzantine.

Tout d'abord, on citera le florilège dogmatique connu sous le nom de *Doctrina Patrum*. Cette anthologie, rédigée avant 726 par quelqu'un qui était engagé dans les mouvements anti-monophysite et anti-monothélite, contient 143 citations bibliques, ainsi que 751 fragments tirés des Pères ou des collections conciliaires. Au chapitre 33, on lit toute une série de définitions de l'εὐχή, sans que ce terme y soit opposé à la προσευχή; toutes ces définitions sont reprises des auteurs patristiques déjà examinés ci-dessus, et l'εὐχή est donc caractérisée comme "un vœu" ou "une promesse"<sup>68</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> PG 93, 540C3-4; cette œuvre a été répertoriée dans la CPG sous les numéros 7454 et C 103.

<sup>64</sup> Sur les sources de la *catena Barberiniana*, voir. S. Lucà, *Anonymus in Ecclesiasten Commentarius qui dicitur Catena trium patrum* (CCSG 11; Turnhout - Leuven, 1983), p. XXIII n. 61, ainsi que A. Labate, *Catena Hauniensis in Ecclesiasten in qua saepe exegesis servatur Dionysii Alexandrini* (CCSG 24; Turnhout - Leuven, 1992), p. XXXVII.

<sup>65</sup> CPG C 104.

<sup>66</sup> Qu'on date du sixième siècle; voir S. Lucà, *Anonymus...*, pp. XXIII-XXIV.

<sup>67</sup> Pour le texte grec, consulter le livre du feu S. Leanza, *L'esegesi di Origene al Libro dell'Ecclesiaste* (Reggio Calabria, 1975), p. 17, l. 3-4: ἔστι γὰρ προσευχή μὲν αἵτησις ἀγαθῶν παρὰ θεοῦ, εὐχή δὲ ἐπαγγελία. L'opposition entre les deux termes se retrouve dans un passage (f. 49<sup>v</sup>-51<sup>v</sup> du *Barberinianus*) qui suit une partie de la scholie sur laquelle les érudits se disputent; S. Leanza, l'éditeur de la chaîne (*L'esegesi...*, pp. 16-8) et bien d'autres rattachent la première partie de la scholie à Origène, tandis que P. Géhin, *Évangile le Pontique. Scholies à l'Ecclesiaste* (SC 397; Paris, 1993), pp. 47 et 120-4, dit que la scholie fait partie du commentaire d'Évagre sur l'*Ecclesiastes*. Mais nous n'entrerons pas dans les détails de cette controverse.

<sup>68</sup> Voir *Doctrina Patrum de incarnatione Verbi. Ein griechisches Florilegium aus der Wende des 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts*. Zum ersten Male vollständig herausgegeben und untersucht von F. Diekamp. 2. Auflage mit Korrekturen und Nachträgen von B. Phanourgakis, herausgegeben von E. Chrysos (Münster, 1981), p. 257. Le texte dit: Εὐχή ἐστὶν ἐπαγγελία τινὸς τῶν κατ' εὐσέβειαν ἀφιερωμένων (p. 257, l. 17-18), une citation

On citera également l'anonyme *Catena trium Patrum in Ecclesiasten*<sup>69</sup>, éditée en 1983 par Santo Lucà<sup>70</sup> et appelée ainsi parce que ce commentaire utilise la pensée de trois auteurs, Grégoire de Nysse, Grégoire le Thaumaturge et Maxime le Confesseur (ou un élève de celui-ci); l'éditeur date la chaîne d'entre 662, date de la mort de S. Maxime, et le onzième siècle<sup>71</sup>. Dans le commentaire d'Ecclesiastes 5, 3-4<sup>72</sup>, on retrouve la définition de l'εὐχή déjà relevée dans l'*Expositio orationis dominicae* de S. Maxime<sup>73</sup>.

Ce commentaire de S. Maxime, cette fois les ll. 200 (εἶναι) - 203 (ἄνθρωποι) et 215 (εἶναι) - 221 (ἀντιδίδωσιν), qui mentionnent l'opposition entre l'εὐχή et la προσευχή, a également été cité dans un florilège conservé dans le seul *Athous, Dionysiou 180*, du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle; cette anthologie est constituée exclusivement de fragments maximiens<sup>74</sup>.

L'opposition explicite entre εὐχή et προσευχή se rencontre également dans le commentaire sur l'Évangile de Matthieu rédigé par Théophylacte, archevêque de Bulgarie (XI<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> siècle); à propos de Mt. 6,9, on lit:

Εὐχή ἄλλο καὶ προσευχή ἄλλο. Εὐχή μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ὑπόσχεσις πρὸς θεόν, ὡς ὅταν ὑπισχνῆται τις ἀποσχέσθαι οἴνου ἢ ἄλλου τινός· προσευχή δὲ ἀγαθῶν αἰτησις.

L'εὐχή est une chose et la προσευχή une autre. L'εὐχή est une promesse à Dieu, comme lorsqu'on promet de s'abstenir de vin ou de quelque chose d'autre; la προσευχή est une demande de biens.

prise à l'homélie de Grégoire de Nysse sur le Notre Père (p. 21, 20-21 de l'édition de Grégoire); εὐχή ἐστιν ὑπόσχεσις ἐξιλάσματος (p. 257, l. 19), provenant des *Carmina moralia* de Grégoire de Nazianze (PG 37, 955A12: Εὐχὴν δ' ὑπόσχεσιν τιν' ἐξιλάσματος); εὐχή ἐστιν ὑπόσχεσις τῶν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων θεῷ κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν προσαγομένων καλῶν (p. 257, l. 21-22), tiré des *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* de S. Maxime (*Quaestio* L, 89-90); εὐχή ἐστιν ὑπόσχεσις ἀγαθῶν ἐκούσιος (p. 257, l. 23), une définition que nous n'avons pas retrouvée telle quelle, mais qui est apparentée aux précédentes.

<sup>69</sup> CPG C 100.

<sup>70</sup> À propos de cette chaîne et des fragments de S. Maxime cités, on consultera avec beaucoup de profit deux articles de S. Lucà, "La Catena dei 3 Padri sull' Ecclesiaste", dans *Studi in onore di A. Ardigzoni* (Roma, 1978), pp. 557-82; "Gli scolii sull' Ecclesiaste del Vallicelliano greco E 21", *Augustinianum* 19 (1979), pp. 287-96.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. pp. XI-XII et XXIV de l'édition de S. Lucà.

<sup>72</sup> Dans l'édition de la *Catena trium patrum*, il s'agit de V, 25-27.

<sup>73</sup> Dans la chaîne, le texte se lit: εὐχή γάρ ἐστιν ὑπόσχεσις ὧν θεῷ προσκομίζουσιν ἄνθρωποι γνησίως τούτῳ λατρεύοντες, ce qui reprend presque littéralement les l. 202-203 de l'*Expositio orationis dominicae* de S. Maxime. À ce sujet, lire S. Lucà, *Anonymus...*, pp. XXV-XXXIX, plus particulièrement XXVII et XXIX. On consultera également P. Van Deun, *Opuscula...*, pp. CXLV-CXLVI.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. P. Van Deun, *Opuscula...*, pp. LXXIII-LXXIV et surtout CLIII.

De plus, un bon nombre d'*Etymologica* byzantins reprennent la même opposition. Ainsi la *Suda*, rédigée vers 1000 à Constantinople, semble-t-il<sup>75</sup>, qui cite la deuxième homélie sur le *Pater* de Grégoire de Nysse<sup>76</sup>. L'*Etymologicum Gudianum*, qui date de l'année 1100 environ, recopie la *Suda*<sup>77</sup>. Citons encore, pour terminer, le lexique attribué jadis à Jean Zonaras, mais dont on sait maintenant qu'il revient à un certain Nicéphore; il date d'entre 1204 et 1253 et provient de Constantinople; on y lit une paraphrase de la définition de l' *εὐχή* telle qu'on la lit chez Grégoire de Nysse<sup>78</sup>.

Venons-en maintenant à quelques florilèges sacro-profanes; une compilation, qu'on appelle *Hiera* ou *Sacra parallela*, se trouverait à la base de tous ces florilèges et daterait du VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle; cette anthologie, rédigée probablement en Palestine, circule parfois sous le nom de Jean Damascène; dans aucun témoin, elle n'est conservée intégralement. Dans plusieurs recensions de ce florilège original, on lit l'opposition entre *εὐχή* et *προσευχή*. Le texte cité est celui des *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* de S. Maxime, mais le compilateur a changé l'ordre des définitions; en effet, dans le florilège, on lit *quaestio* L, 89 (*εὐχή*) - 90 (*καλῶν*), 87 (*Προσευχῇ*) - 88 (*εἰκότως*), 90 (*προσευχῇ*), 91 (*ἔσται*) et 91 (*ῆ*) - 93 (*διαθέσεως*). Ce fragment tiré des *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* est toujours suivi immédiatement des ll. 198 (*οἱ*) - 221 (*ἀντιδίδωσιν*) de l'*Expositio orationis dominicae* du même auteur<sup>79</sup>.

Examinons brièvement les diverses recensions des *Sacra parallela* qui nous intéressent ici.

Tout d'abord, il s'agit du *Florilegium Coislinianum secundum alphabeti litteras dispositum*, dont le témoin le plus ancien date du IX<sup>e</sup>-X<sup>e</sup> siècle et

<sup>75</sup> Cf. *Suidae Lexicon* edidit Ada Adler, pars II (Lexicographi Graeci I. Sammlung wissenschaftlicher Kommentare; Leipzig, 1931 = Stuttgart, 1967), n° 3819 (p. 480): *Εὐχή γὰρ ἐπαγγελία θεῷ τῶν κατ' εὐσέβειαν ἀφιερουμένων, προσευχή δὲ δέησις μετὰ ἱκετηρίας τῷ θεῷ προσαγομένη.*

<sup>76</sup> Dans l'édition de J.F. Callahan, *Gregorii...*, p. 21, l. 20 (*εὐχή*) - l. 22 (*θεῷ*). Remarquons seulement que l' *αἴτησις* du texte de Grégoire est devenue, dans la *Suda*, *δέησις*.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. *Etymologicum Gudianum quod vocatur* ed. A. de Stefani, II (Stuttgart, 1920 = Amsterdam, 1965), p. 567: *εὐχή καὶ προσευχή διαφέρει. Εὐχή λέγεται ἐπαγγελία τινῶν τῶν κατ' εὐσέβειαν ἀφιερωμένων θεῷ, προσευχή δὲ δέησις μετὰ ἱκετηρίας τῷ θεῷ προσαγομένη.*

<sup>78</sup> Cf. *Iohannis Zonarae Lexicon* ed. Joh.A.H. Tittmann, I (Leipzig, 1808 = Amsterdam, 1967), col. 913: *Εὐχή ἐπαγγελία καὶ ὑπόσχεσις, ὡς ἐξ ἀνθρώπου θεοῦ (pour θεῷ) ἀφιερουμένη· ἡ σύστασις δώρου πρὸς θεόν, ἡ παρὰ τῶν δούλων αὐτοῦ γινομένη ἐκούσιος (an legendum ἐκουσίως?)· εὐχή ἡ τοῦ εὐ ἔχειν αἴτησις.*

<sup>79</sup> Cf. P. Van Deun, *Opuscula...*, pp. CLV-CLVII; voir également C. Laga - C. Steel, *Thalassium...*, II, pp. XLII-XLV.

qui a été conservé lui même en trois recensions différentes; c'est le témoin unique de la première recension, un manuscrit de la collection Coislin, qui a donné son nom à tout le florilège. On y retrouve la combinaison des deux sections maximiennes, qui ont reçu chacune un titre spécial<sup>80</sup>.

Cette même combinaison se lit dans une autre recension des *Hiera*, le *Florilegium Hierosolymitanum*<sup>81</sup>, désigné ainsi d'après son témoin le plus important, le codex *Hierosolymitanus, Sancti Sepulcri 15*, du X<sup>e</sup>-XI<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>82</sup>. La parenté avec le *Florilegium Coislinianum* est claire: les *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* sont cités de la même manière, les deux sections et leurs titres respectifs se retrouvent intacts<sup>83</sup>; en voici le texte:

Ὁρος εὐχῆς, Μαξίμου μοναχοῦ

Εὐχή ἐστὶν ὑπόσχεσις τῶν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων θεῷ κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν προσαγομένων καλῶν. Προσευχὴ ἐστὶν αἴτησις ὧν πέφυκεν ὁ θεὸς ἀνθρώποις δωρεῖσθαι πρὸς σωτηρίαν. Καὶ μάλα γε εἰκότως· προσευχὴ ἐστὶν ἢ τῶν ἐκ θεοῦ πρὸς σωτηρίαν χορηγουμένων τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀγαθῶν ἐξαίτησις, ἀντίδοσιν φέρουσα τῆς τῶν προηυγμένων καλῆς διαθέσεως.

Ce fragment est pris, on s'en souvient, à la *quaestio* L *ad Thalassium*, 89 (εὐχή) - 90 (καλῶν); 87 (Προσευχὴ) - 88 (εἰκότως); 90 (προσευχὴ), 91 (ἔσται) et 91 (ἢ) - 93 (διαθέσεως).

Τί διαφέρει εὐχὴ προσευχῆς;

Οἱ θεόπνευστοι πατέρες ἡμῶν ὀριστικῶς ... ἀντίδοσιν = *Expositio orationis dominicae* de S. Maxime, ll. 198-221.

Sous un titre analogue, à savoir τοῦ ἁγίου Μαξίμου ὁρος εὐχῆς σύντομος, on retrouve encore le fragment cité des *Quaestiones ad*

<sup>80</sup> Respectivement ὁρος εὐχῆς σύντομος, Μαξίμου μοναχοῦ et τί διαφέρει εὐχὴ προσευχῆς;

<sup>81</sup> À ce propos, consulter l'étude magistrale de M. Richard, "Florilèges spirituels grecs", dans *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, V (Paris, 1962-1964), coll. 483-4, reprise dans M. Richard, *Opera minora*, I (Turnhout - Leuven, 1976), no I.

<sup>82</sup> Pour une description du manuscrit, voir A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 'Ιεροσολυμιτική βιβλιοθήκη ἥτοι κατάλογος τῶν ἐν ταῖς βιβλιοθήκαις τοῦ ἁγιοτάτου ἀποστολικοῦ τε καὶ καθολικοῦ ὀρθοδόξου πατριαρχικοῦ θρόνου τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων καὶ πάσης Παλαιστίνης ἀποκειμένων ἐλληνικῶν κωδίκων, I (Saint-Petersbourg, 1891), pp. 65-8.

<sup>83</sup> Au f. 340<sup>r-v</sup>.

*Thalassium*, dans un manuscrit de mélanges, le *Parisinus gr. 969*, du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>84</sup>, de nouveau dans l'ordre spécial qui prouve clairement sa relation avec les recensions déjà mentionnées des *Hiera*; en voici le texte:

Εὐχή ἐστὶν ὑπόσχησις τῶν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων θεῷ κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν προσαγομένων καλῶν. Προσευχὴ δὲ ἐστὶν αἴτησις ὧν πέφυκε θεὸς ἀνθρώποις δωρεῖσθαι. Καὶ μάλα γε εἰκότως· προσευχή ἐστὶν ἢ τῶν ἐκ θεοῦ πρὸς σωτηρίαν χορηγουμένων τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀγαθῶν ἐξαίτησις, ἀντίδοσιν φέρουσα τῆς τῶν προηγουμένων (sic) καλῆς διαθέσεως.

La même séquence de ces deux fragments tirés, l'un, des *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* et l'autre, de l'*Expositio orationis dominicae* de S. Maxime se rencontre également ailleurs. Selon le catalogue d'Henri Omont<sup>85</sup>, on lit dans le *Parisinus gr. 1076* un 'tractatus de oratione' de Maxime le Confesseur, introduit par les mots τοῦ ἁγίου Μαξίμου περὶ προσευχῆς καὶ εὐχῆς; en réalité, il s'agit d'une petite compilation qui n'occupe que les ll. 16-27 du f. 282<sup>v</sup>; un compilateur anonyme a cité, sans aucune transition, quelques définitions de l' εὐχή et de la προσευχή, tirées de différents auteurs; cet opuscule se lit également au f. 67<sup>r-v</sup> de l'*Athous, Dionysiou 626*, manuscrit tardif du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle<sup>86</sup>. En voici l'édition:

Διαφέρει δὲ εὐχή προσευχῆς. Εὐχή μὲν<sup>87</sup> ἐστὶν ὑπόσχεσις τῶν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων θεῷ κατ' ἐπαγγελίαν προσαγομένων· καὶ ἵνα σαφέστερον εἴπω, εὐχή μὲν ἐστὶν ἐντολῶν τήρησις κατὰ γνώμην πράξει τοῦ εὐξαμένου κεκυρωμένη, προσευχή δὲ τῆς πρὸς τὰ ῥηθέντα καλὰ τοῦ τετηρηκότος μεταποιήσεως αἴτησις. Εὐχή<sup>88</sup> μὲν ἐστὶν εὐχαριστηρίου δωροφορίας ἐπαγγελία, προσευχή δὲ ἢ μετὰ τὴν ἐκπλήρωσιν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τῷ θεῷ γινόμενη πρόσοδος. Εὐχή μὲν<sup>89</sup> ἐστὶν ἐπαγγελία τινὸς τῶν κατ' εὐσέβειαν ἀφιερουμένων, προσευχή δὲ αἴτησις ἀγαθῶν

<sup>84</sup> Pour une description succincte de ce manuscrit, voir H. Omont, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque nationale et des autres bibliothèques de Paris et des départements*, I (Paris, 1886), p. 188. Le fragment se trouve au f. 320v.

<sup>85</sup> *Inventaire sommaire...*, p. 216. Nous préparons une description détaillée de ce manuscrit, sous le titre "Le Parisinus gr. 1076: un recueil ascétique du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle".

<sup>86</sup> Sur ce manuscrit, on consultera la description sommaire d'Euthymios Dionysiatis, Συμπληρωματικὸς κατάλογος ἑλληνικῶν χειρογράφων Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς Διονυσίου Ἁγίου Ὁρους, Ἑπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν 27 (1957), p. 241; nous préparons une description plus détaillée de ce codex, laquelle paraîtra dans notre édition critique du *Liber Asceticus* de Maxime le Confesseur (dans la Series Graeca du Corpus Christianorum).

<sup>87</sup> μὲν] μὲν γάρ *Athous*.

<sup>88</sup> Εὐχή] καὶ εὐχή *Athous*.

<sup>89</sup> μὲν] *omisit Athous*.

μεθ' ἱκετηρίας προσαγομένη τῷ<sup>90</sup> θεῷ. Διδάσκει οὖν ὁ λόγος μὴ πρότερον αἰτεῖσθαι τί παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, πρὶν αὐτῷ τί τῶν κεχαρισμένων δωροφορῆσαι· εὐξασθαι γὰρ<sup>91</sup> πρότερον, εἴτα προσεύξασθαι.

Contrairement à ce qu'Omout semble prétendre, ce petit florilège ne va pas jusqu'au f. 284<sup>v</sup>; très probablement, il n'a pas remarqué, au bas du f. 282<sup>v</sup>, le nouveau lemme Γερωντικῷ.

La première définition de l' εὐχή (Εὐχή - προσαγομένων) est reprise aux *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* de Maxime le Confesseur<sup>92</sup>, tandis que l'antithèse entre εὐχή et προσευχή qui suit (εὐχή - μεταποιήσεως αἴτησις) provient de l'*Expositio orationis dominicae* du même auteur<sup>93</sup>. Le florilège poursuit avec la même opposition, tirée cette fois de la deuxième homélie sur le Notre Père de Grégoire de Nysse<sup>94</sup>; c'est de ce même ouvrage que provient également tout ce qui suit<sup>95</sup>.

Il est évident également que ce petit texte est apparenté à celui qu'on lit par exemple dans le *Florilegium Coislinianum*. Très probablement, on peut encore établir le lien qui unit ce texte à la chaîne sur l'Évangile de S. Matthieu de Nicétas d'Héraclée<sup>96</sup>.

En effet, les deux fragments de S. Maxime ont également été combinés par le célèbre caténiste Nicétas d'Héraclée dans sa chaîne sur l'Évangile de Matthieu (CPG C 113); cette chaîne, compilée entre 1105 et 1112 ou 1116<sup>97</sup>, cite surtout Jean Chrysostome; parmi les autres auteurs cités, ne mentionnons que Cyrille, Basile, Isidore, Grégoire de Nazianze et Maxime le Confesseur, lequel a été utilisé 97 fois<sup>98</sup>. On y lit<sup>99</sup> un fragment un peu plus court pris aux *Quaestiones ad*

<sup>90</sup> τῷ] *omisi* Athous.

<sup>91</sup> γὰρ] *χρή* τὸ *addidit* Athous.

<sup>92</sup> *Quaestio* I, 89-90.

<sup>93</sup> Lignes 215-218.

<sup>94</sup> Dans l'édition de J.F. Callahan, on retrouve cette opposition à la p. 22, l. 3 (εὐχή) - 6 (πρόσοδον).

<sup>95</sup> Cf. J.F. Callahan, *Gregori...*, p. 21, l. 20 (εὐχή) - l. 22 (θεῷ) et p. 22, l. 6 (διδάσκει) - l. 8/9 (προσεύξασθαι). Cf. P. Van Deun, *Opuscula ...*, pp. CLII-III.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. P. Van Deun, *Opuscula...*, pp. CLII-III.

<sup>97</sup> Pour la datation, voir notre article "Les Diversa Capita du Pseudo-Maxime (CPG 7715) et la chaîne de Nicétas d'Héraclée sur l'Évangile de Matthieu (CPG C 113)", *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 45 (1995), pp. 19-24.

<sup>98</sup> Récemment, nous avons répertorié tous les fragments de S. Maxime cités dans cette chaîne: "Les extraits de Maxime le Confesseur contenus dans les chaînes sur l'Évangile de Matthieu", dans *Philohistôr. Miscellanea in honorem C. Laga septuagenarii* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 60; Leuven, 1994), pp. 297-316.

<sup>99</sup> Dans une section intitulée Διαφέρει εὐχή προσευχῆς ου Τί διαφέρει εὐχή προσευχῆς; et attribuée à Μακάριος, à Μάρκος ou à Μάξιμος, selon les différents témoins de la chaîne.



*Thalassium* L, 87-90, avec l'ordre des lignes inversé<sup>100</sup>, suivi des ll. 215-221 de l'*Expositio orationis dominicae*<sup>101</sup>.

Pour finir, notons encore que les ll. 200 (εἶναι) - 203 (ἄνθρωποι) de l'*Expositio orationis dominicae* se retrouvent également dans le *Vaticanus gr.* 349, codex du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle, dans lequel le texte des quatre évangiles a été expliqué à l'aide de scholies dispersées, principalement prises à des œuvres du Confesseur<sup>102</sup>. Le compilateur de ce commentaire a souvent utilisé celui de Nicétas, mais ce n'est pas le cas ici, car Nicétas, on se souvient, n'a pas cité les ll. 200-203 de l'*Expositio orationis dominicae*<sup>103</sup>.

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Notre recherche des attestations de l'opposition explicite entre εὐχή et προσευχή a été plus fructueuse qu'on n'aurait pu le prévoir: l'opposition peut être suivie à partir d'Origène jusqu'à l'époque tardive de l'histoire byzantine. De plus, la définition de l'εὐχή comme ὑπόσχησις ou ἐπαγγελία se rencontre souvent aussi sans qu'on explicite l'opposition à la notion de προσευχή; cela vaut également pour la définition de la προσευχή comme αἵτησις; l'origine de ces définitions respectives, vouées elles aussi à une longue fortune, est plus ancienne: on en trouve les traces dans la Bible et dans des œuvres de l'Antiquité païenne.

Mais répétons encore une fois que la connaissance de la signification exacte de ces deux mots n'a toutefois pas empêché les auteurs patristiques et byzantins de les utiliser dans leur sens imprécis. Sans l'avoir cherché, nous avons pu constater une fois de plus le caractère répétitif et souvent purement théorique de l'érudition byzantine; cela contribua sûrement à la décadence de Byzance.

<sup>100</sup> On y lit: *Quaestiones ad Thalassium* L, 89 (εὐχή - 90 (καλῶν); 87 (Προσευχῇ) - 88 (σωτηρίαν).

<sup>101</sup> Cf. P. Van Deun, *Opuscula...*, pp. CXLVII-CLIII.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. P. Van Deun, *Opuscula...*, pp. CXLVI-VII. Ce commentaire est repertorié dans la CPG sous les numéros C 116, 126.2 et 147.2. On notera que le compilateur a modifié ses sources.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. P. Van Deun, "Extraits...", pp. 316-28.

## READER RESPONSE

H. Welzen

The somewhat enigmatic title of this paper refers to some important developments in the scholarly research of biblical texts. In the first part of this article I will discuss some of the fundamental changes in the exegesis of biblical texts which have occurred in the last few decades and which are still taking place. In the second part I will present an example of the way, in which an author of the New Testament reads and explains biblical texts. More specifically, an example will be given of the fascinating and unique way of dealing with a text as is done in *Hebrews*.

### 1. *Some recent important developments in the exegesis of biblical texts*

#### 1.1. *From diachrony to synchrony*

In the late sixties and in the seventies scholarly exegesis of biblical texts, which was based on the historical-critical method, came under fire. Everywhere the principle of diachrony was employed: in the historical quest to find out whether all the events mentioned in the text had really happened, in literary criticism, in form criticism and in redactional criticism. Texts were considered as entities which had evolved into their final stage in the course of time. One had to know and even be able to reconstruct the historical development of the text before one could fully understand it.

In the sixties and seventies this obvious starting point was left behind. The principle of diachrony was replaced by the principle of synchrony. It was recognized that texts were meaningful outside the history of their development and that it was worth the effort to study texts as unities, existing at a given point in time. Especially French structuralism and the "école de Paris", of which A.J. Greimas<sup>1</sup> was

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. among others, A.J. Greimas, *Du sens. Essais sémiotiques* (Paris, 1970); A.J. Greimas, *Maupassant. La sémiotique du text: exercices pratiques* (Paris, 1976); A.J. Greimas, *Sémantique structurale* (Paris, 1966); A.J. Greimas; J. Courtès, *Dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage* (Paris, 1979). Tome 2 (Hachette, 1986).

the founding father, guided these developments in the beginning. The semiotic theories of A.J. Greimas have been developed by the Groupe d'Entrevernes<sup>2</sup> into a model for analysis, which has been found especially fruitful for the analysis of biblical narratives. In our country the study group of Semanet<sup>3</sup>, and the research group at Nijmegen University, which was working on the parables of the gospel of Luke,<sup>4</sup> among other things, concentrated on the semiotic analysis of biblical narratives.

In these developments the meaning of the text was no longer sought in the history of the text before its final wording, but in the text itself. The text was seen as a tissue that could be studied as an independent entity by describing how the parts are linked, in their syntagmatic as well as in their paradigmatic dimensions. Already in the beginning of the eighties the text-immanent character of this approach was criticized. It became clear that, besides the syntactic and semantic attention, attention for the pragmatic aspects of the text was also needed. At that time the research group of Nijmegen University, mentioned above, sought ways to pay attention to the pragmatic dimensions of the text within the framework of semiotic analysis.

### 1.2. *Attention for the reader*

Meanwhile there were some quite different developments which invite us to shift the attention from the author-oriented research to the reader-oriented investigation. Thus the periodical *Semeia*<sup>5</sup> devoted some instalments to a reader-oriented exegesis. The distinctions

<sup>2</sup> Groupe d'Entrevernes, *Signes et paraboles. Sémiotiques et texte évangélique* (Paris, 1977). Groupe d'Entrevernes, *Analyse sémiotique des textes. Introduction, Théorie—pratique* (Lyon, 1979).

<sup>3</sup> Semanet (edited by G. Lukken), *Semiotiek en christelijke uitingsvormen* (Hilversum, 1987). K. Joosse and P. de Maat, members of Semanet, produced the translation of the dictionary of A.J. Greimas and J. Courtès, *Analytisch woordenboek van de semiotiek* (Tilburg, 1979). There is also a translation in English by L. Crist, D. Patte and others, *Semiotic and Language. An analytical Dictionary* (Bloomington, 1982).

<sup>4</sup> H. Welzen, *Lucas, evangelist van gemeenschap. Een onderzoek naar de pragmatische effecten in Lc 15,1-17,10* (Nijmegen, 1986); B. van Iersel, T. van Schaik, S. van Tilborg, H. Welzen, W. Weren, *Parabelverhalen in Lucas. Van semiotiek naar pragmatiek* (Tilburg, 1987); E.J. van Wolde, *A Semiotic Analysis of Genesis 2-3. A Semiotic Theory and Method of Analysis to the story of the garden of Eden* (Assen, 1989).

<sup>5</sup> R. Detweiler (ed), *Reader Response Approaches to Biblical and Secular Texts* (Atlanta, 1985) = *Semeia* Nr. 31; E.V. McKnight, *Reader Perspectives on the New Testament* (Atlanta, 1989) = *Semeia* nr. 48.

made by W. Iser<sup>6</sup> and U. Eco<sup>7</sup> were applied to the exegesis of biblical texts. The most important starting point is that in a reader-oriented exegesis the focus is not on the actual reader, but on a "reader in the text", that is to say the role the actual reader is supposed to play in giving meaning to the text. The text as it were gives instructions to the reader, who constructs a meaning of the text with the help of these instructions. This reader who is supposed to be in the text, is called "der implizite Leser" by W. Iser.

It is important here to see the enormous changes in the presentation of the question. It is not the intention of the author which is the central point, nor the structure of the text, but the interaction between text and reader. As far as there is a question of an author in a reader-oriented exegesis, it is an implied author, that is to say not the author of flesh and blood, but the author who is implicitly present in the text as a participant. The role of the narrator is a more detailed specification of the implied reader.

To illustrate the distinction between the author and the readers of flesh and blood on the one side, and the implied author and the implied reader on the other side, I will use the example of *Il Nome della Rosa* by Umberto Eco<sup>8</sup>. Eco is the author in the empirical world, the author of flesh and blood, who from the author's side is responsible for the empirical process of communication. On the reader's side there are the millions who have actually read Eco's book. Thus on the reader's side it is they, who are responsible for the empirical process of communication. In the book itself there is an agent, viz. the narrator, who initiates the communication within the book. This text-immanent participant is Adson, who, in his old age, looks back on the adventures which he experienced as a novice. The textual participant addressed by Adson is the fictional, implied reader. Actually in narratives these text-immanent participants are often unnamed. The distinctions we have made leave open the possibility that the author of flesh and blood and the text-immanent narrator are the same. But this is not always the case. From the systematical point of view we have to distinguish them.

<sup>6</sup> W. Iser, *Der implizite Leser. Kommunikationsformen des Romans von Bunyan bis Beckett* (München, 1979<sup>2</sup>); W. Iser, *Der Akt des Lesens. Theorie Ästhetischer Wirkung* (München, 1976).

<sup>7</sup> U. Eco, *The Role of the Reader. Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (London, etc. 1983<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>8</sup> U. Eco, *Il Nome della Rosa* (Milano, 1980).

B. Lategan<sup>9</sup> wonders whether the real point of contact in the interaction between text and reader concerns the implied author and the implied reader. The most usual starting point is S. Chatman's<sup>10</sup> model of communication, which consists of the following terms:

real author → implied author → (narrator) → (narratee) → implied reader → real reader.

However, B. Lategan thinks it more probable that for the description of the communication between the author and the reader one has to start from two movements in opposite directions. "The real author, when writing is reaching out for the implied reader (as no other reader is present at this moment). The real reader, when reading, is reaching out for the implied author (as no other author is present)." The real author can only direct himself to whomever he thinks or supposes the reader is. The real reader can only reach the real author via the implied author, that is to say via the signs and the instructions given by the implied author.

B. van Iersel<sup>11</sup> also proposed changes in the communication model of S. Chatman. Put on the right track by R. M. Fowler<sup>12</sup> en P. Danove<sup>13</sup>, he actually speaks of two directions as well. The implied reader shows how the author has visualised his readers, when producing the text of the narrative. The reader, on the the other hand, has his eye on the author and the narrator; and this, of course, on the basis of the data in the text which are provided by the real author. Actually the real reader has a double position. He is involved in the process of reading the written text, both in a receptive and in a productive sense. In a receptive sense the reader is touched by the text. In a productive sense the reader is involved in the process of reading when he is attributing meanings to the text. One of the meanings which the reader can generate on the basis of the signals present in the text, is an impression of the narrator and the implied author. There is much discussion concerning the activity of the

<sup>9</sup> B. Lategan, "Coming to Grips with the Reader" in: *Semeia* (1989) nr 48, pp. 3-17, especially pp. 10-11.

<sup>10</sup> S. Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, (Ithaca/New York, 1978), p. 151. This model is the starting point for many different models which are used by different authors.

<sup>11</sup> B. van Iersel, "His master's voice. De impliciete verteller in Marcus: stem en literaire gestalte" in: *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 34 (1994), pp. 115-127. See also B. Van Iersel, *Marcus uitgelegd aan andere lezers* (Baarn—Kampen, 1997), especially pp. 19-32.

<sup>12</sup> R.M. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Minneapolis, 1991).

<sup>13</sup> P. Danove, *The End of Mark's Story* (Leiden, 1993).

reader and his contribution to the process of producing meaning from the text. From the hermeneutical point of view the opinion that the text, and only the text, is the bearer of the meaning and that this meaning is implied in the text, is no longer tenable. An objective and value-free reading solely determined by the text does not exist. The position at the other side of the spectrum is that there is no text at all, but only interpretation. In this opinion there is only the reader who makes a text from the specks of ink on a sheaf of papers tied up with gum or string. There is no text. Such a position is for instance held by Stanly Fish.<sup>14</sup> The question how it is possible that several people assign more or less the same meaning to a text, he answers by pointing to the authority of the interpretative communities to which the readers belong. In this theory, however, it is not made clear how frequently new meanings come into being, and that not only already existing meanings are repeated. Yet the history of interpretation of biblical texts shows us that readers have created meanings, which add something new to already existing meanings. The authority of interpretative communities is not sufficient to explain this.

### 1.3. *The constructive work of the reader*

I present the process of meaning as a circular model of interaction. Of course the reader attributes meaning to the text by the activity of reading, but at the same time he is guided by the data in the text. The text of the reader should be distinguished from the text of the author.<sup>15</sup> The text of the author is the text made by the author, which has found its material expression in the written product. The text of the reader is the total of meanings constructed by the activity of the reader on the basis of the instructions given by the text. The often used metaphor of the musical score is illuminating in this respect. The score is the music written on paper. But it is the musician who interprets the notes on the paper and adapts them to sweet-sounding music. In the same way the text has found a material expression in the written product, a series of instructions for the reader to construct a meaningful whole.

<sup>14</sup> Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretative Communities* (Cambridge, 1980).

<sup>15</sup> So for instance already B. van Iersel "De lezer ontcijfert de tekst en vult in" in: *Schrift* (1980) nr 71, pp. 166-171. He uses the terms 'schrijfttekst' and 'leestekst' on pp. 169-171.

To understand the constructive work of the reader the difference between spoken and written text is very important. On a number of points a spoken and a written text differ essentially. In the case of a spoken text the speaker is always present. The communicative situation in which the text is spoken is also always present. The same is true for the persons who are directly addressed. That is not the case with a written text. In comparison with the spoken text there has been a departure of the author. The author is no longer there. The text has become independent. In literary science this has sometimes been called the author's death. There is also a separation from the original context. The context is separated from the written text, too. At the same time there is the separation of the addressee from the spoken text. With this threefold separation of author, context and addressee,<sup>16</sup> the text has become an orphan, so to say. A result of all this is that when we are saying something about the intention of the author or about the context in which the text has functioned, it is always a reconstruction of this intention and a reconstruction of this context. In the case of written texts, intentions of the author, and context are products of the reader. The texts are, as it were, given back their parents by the reader, but one has to realize that they are only foster parents.

The alienation of the origin by putting the text into writing is also the condition on the basis of which the text can be actualized in other contexts. The separation from author, context and addressee makes it possible for the text to be read in another context. In fact people speak of decontextualization and recontextualisation.<sup>17</sup> Through the process of reading started by different readers the text is understood against different backgrounds. A plurality of meanings becomes possible in this process of decontextualization and recontextualisation.

With the instructions for reading to be found in the text, the so-called "gaps" are important. Gaps are all the places of indeterminacy which are present in a text. It has been pointed out that gaps are especially important for narrative texts. Gaps are points in a text where information important for the structure of a narrative is hardly or not at all given. These gaps come into being by a certain manner of presentation or a certain way of narration which can differ de-

<sup>16</sup> See for this P. Ricoeur, *Du texte à l' action. Essais d' herméneutique II* (Paris, 1986), pp. 183-211, especially, pp. 187-190.

<sup>17</sup> So for instance W. Weren, *Intertextualiteit en bijbel* (Kampen, 1993), pp. 16-17.

pending on the literary genre of the text. They occur for instance at the transition from one situation to another. Gaps have an important function in the interaction between the text and the reader. They activate the reader's response to the text. Thus gaps are part of the pragmatics of the text. It is for the reader to fill up these gaps. Gaps also have a function when a reader is forced to modify the horizon of his expectations about what is narrated, on the basis of the instructions offered for reading, if these instructions do not correspond to the reader's expectations.<sup>18</sup> Gaps enable the reader to make new reconstructions of the narrated world. So not only what is in the text, but also what is not in the text determines the process of assigning meaning which takes place while reading.

For a good interaction between text and reader a well balanced quantity of gaps is important. If there are few gaps, the danger exists that the reader finds the text dull and not challenging enough. If there are too many, the events narrated in the text become vague. There is too little information then. The effect of gaps makes clear that both the information given and the information not given are important for the meaning to come about. Gaps have several functions. By appearing for instance at the transitions between situations they mark these transitions and link up necessary connections by—strangely enough—giving no information. The reader reconstructs these necessary connections on the basis of data in the text of which he actually does have information. The imagination and the fantasy of the reader are thus stimulated. Another kind of gap can come about when the world of the story is presented from different points of view, the point of view of the narrator and the points of view of various characters. The reader is stimulated to take up his own position in and towards the narrated world.

#### 1.4. *The reader and the critic*

Important is also the question what kind of reader gives meaning to the text. For there are different ways of reading. In literary criticism one distinguishes between the common reading and the critical analysis of texts. In his study about the gospel of Mark, R. Fowler<sup>19</sup> wrote about this. First of all it must be said that the common reading

<sup>18</sup> W. Iser, *Der Akt des Lesens. Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung* (München, 1976), p. 263.

<sup>19</sup> R. Fowler, o.c. pp. 27-31.



and the critical analysis cannot be seen as two totally different things. They partly overlap. If we put the reader and the critic in a spectrum we may say that the critic is the judge and master of the text, whereas the reader is the servant to the text. The critic so to say steps back from the text to take a pose of critical, objectifying distance, whereas in the common reading this distance between reader and text is minimalized. It is as if the text allows the reader to identify with the text. The reader loses himself in the text. One can illustrate this by referring to one's own experience. When a reader is absorbed in a fascinating book, he is no longer aware of his environment. The time and space of his reading situation are replaced by the time and space of the story he is reading. The reader is being read by the text. Or as Fowler put it elsewhere in his study: what is read has become the here and now of the reader.

An illustration of the distinction between critic and reader is found in the difference in dealing with what is usually called the whole and its parts. In common reading one cannot really speak about the whole and its parts. At the moment of reading the eye is going along the text and what is being read at this moment has the attention. The text already read is the background. The same is true of the expectation of what is to be read. In his phenomenological studies of the process of reading Wolfgang Iser makes use of the distinction between "Figur" and "Grund"; a distinction also used in the psychology of observation.<sup>20</sup> "Figur" is what is presented as a field within an outline. "Grund" is the field outside an outline. Depending on what one regards as within or outside the outline, "Figur" and "Grund" interchange. In the process of reading there is this relationship of "Figur" and "Grund" between on the one hand, the text being read at this moment, and on the other hand the text already read or to be read. In the critical analysis there is a coherence of a different type. One can rightly call this a coherence of the whole and its parts. The critic can try to survey the whole through objectifying distance and to determine the relationship between the whole and the parts. To determine this relationship is part of his job as a critic.

A second point in the distinction between the critic and the common reader is that the critic forms opinions about the text and argues about them. The reader does not do these things, because he is not objectifying the text. For the reader the text and the things read in

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<sup>20</sup> W. Iser, *o.c.* pp. 155-161.

the text are a real presence which is not accessible for a critical approach and even resist it. One can feel this resistance for example when a reader is going to analyze a text which is very significant for him and in which he is quite emotionally involved.

The critic as well as the common reader have to do with a series of texts that set a standard. By analyzing texts and assessing them a critic makes this standard and this series of texts. He is choosing texts. The common reader has a different relation to this series. The reader is not choosing texts, but there is a kind of canon that forms him. The critic prescribes which texts have to be read; he is shaping a canon. But in the process of reading the canon of texts is a living entity that shapes the reader.

So the spectrum in which the critic and the reader are moving consists of two poles. The one side is the objectifying pole. At this pole the critical experience of reading and analyzing is very often placed in the history of critical reading. The critic has a discussion with other critics who have already formed an opinion about the text. Illuminating for this are the footnotes of "german" commentaries of biblical texts processed in the classical way. The other side is the subjectifying pole in which the individual and psychologizing reading much more easily takes a place. In postmodern and deconstructive theories of texts these readings get much attention.

### 1.5. *Instructions for reading*

For the actual reader-oriented analysis of a text, the question what the instructions for reading imply, is very important. The answer to this question is as simple as it is complex: it is the text in its totality. All that the text contains in presenting the text, the course of actions, descriptions of situations, focalizations, internal and external evaluations, contributes to the process of giving meaning to the text, to the process taking place between the text and the reader. In this context the following remarks made by W. Vorster are very clarifying: "It is in this respect that the reader in the text, the author in the text, the narrator and the narratee, the presentation of the story, the emplotment, order, time, events, and other existants in the narrative world become important." "Since the structure of any text is designed with the reader in mind, traces of the reader in the text are to be looked for on all the levels of the structure and functions of narratives. Pro- and retrospection, gaps and indeterminacy, selection and

organization, are signs of the reader as Iser and Eco have indicated. All the narrative features such as plot, characterization, point of view, narrative commentary, order of narration, and time and space give clues to the actual reader in his or her construction of an image of the implied reader."<sup>21</sup> In a reader-oriented analysis all the elements mentioned are not aimed at the coming into being of meaning in referential or mimetic sense, but meaning in pragmatic sense. Now they are understood as instructions to the reader with the help of which he is bringing about his reading-text. Using the metaphor of the musical score again, they are the notes with the help of which the musician voices the music. Meaning originates from the meeting of text and reader. The reader-oriented explanation of texts signifies that meaning is no longer taken in an objectivistic sense, no longer as the intention of the author or as a reference to a signified reality. Meaning is dynamic and subjective. With that, however, meaning has not become arbitrary.

### 1.6. *Intertextuality*

In the developments of biblical research of the last few years special attention has been asked for the intertextuality of biblical texts and not without results.<sup>22</sup> The term "intertextuality" has been introduced by J. Kristeva. "Every text is built up as a mosaic of quotations, every text is reception and transformation of another text. Instead of the notion of intersubjectivity the notion of intertextuality has now established itself."<sup>23</sup> The awareness of intertextuality produces new insights about the meaning of and about attributing meaning to texts. This awareness is based on the insight that texts are connected with each other. Texts are part of a larger system of language. Reading texts against the background of this larger system gives an "extra"

<sup>21</sup> W. Vorster "The Reader of the Text: Narrative Material" in: *Semeia* (1989) nr 48, pp. 21-39. The quotations can be found on p. 30 and p. 32.

<sup>22</sup> See a.o. J. Bastiaens, *Interpretaties van Jes. 53. Een intertextueel onderzoek naar de lijdende dienstknecht in Jes 53 (MT/LXX) en in Lk 22:14-38, Hand 3:12-26 en Hand 4:23-31* (Tilburg, 1993); S. Draisma (ed.), *Intertextuality in Biblical Writings* (Kampen, 1989); B. van Iersel, *Intertextualiteit in soorten. Een voorstel tot enkele nieuwe classificaties verhelderd aan Mt 1-2 en Lc 1-2 en experimenteel toegepast op Mc 1,1-13*, Afscheidscollege Katholieke Universiteit (Nijmegen, 1989); E. van Wolde, "Van tekst via tekst naar betekenis: Intertextualiteit en haar implicaties" in: *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 30 (1990), pp. 333-361; W. Weren, *Intertextualiteit en Bijbel* (Kampen, 1993).

<sup>23</sup> J. Kristeva, *Sémiotikè. Recherche pour une sémanalyse* (Paris, 1969), p. 146.

meaning that would not exist without this background. This means that in the process of reading texts, a richer meaning presents itself if one takes into account other texts that are part of the larger system.

The aim of intertextual investigation is twofold. One wants to describe the relations between the fenotext and the architext as precisely as possible and then determine which role these intertextual relations play in the process of meaning that is enacted in the activity of reading. It is important to realize that intertextuality has nothing to do with interdependence of texts. If that were the case, intertextuality would only be a new name for the classical diachronic research. Intertextuality is not about something that happens in the genesis of texts, but in the process of readers giving meaning to texts. For it is the reader who puts the text in the larger language system.

There is a minimalistic and a maximalistic understanding of intertextuality. Minimalistic is the view that only considers as relevant the architexts indicated in the fenotext by indicators. In this case there is only the intertextuality marked by the text itself. It will be clear that in this opinion only explicitly marked quotations are reviewed and that for the intertextual process of meaning hardly any activity is demanded from the reader. The text itself has already done the job in this respect. All the dimensions of meaning are lost that might have come up if the reader had been aware that in the text other texts are echoing. If the reader realizes that in the words of welcome of Elisabeth in Luke 1,42: Εὐλογημένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξίν, there is an echo of the blessing in Judges 5,24, of Jael, who has conquered the enemy by driving a tent pin into the head of Sisera, the commander-in-chief of the enemies, or if the reader realizes that Judith is blessed with the same words because she had rescued the town of Betulia by beheading Holofernes (Judith 13,18), then the meaning of the text does not so quickly acquire the romantic atmosphere which many people attach to it. In a minimalistic understanding of intertextuality these unmarked relationships of texts are not noticed and the effects on the meaning are lost.

The maximalistic understanding sees intertextuality as a feature of every utterance. Every utterance has its home in an continually growing language system. Every text appears as part of a universal intertext. This understanding leads to a never ending process of meaning by connecting the fenotext again and again to new and different intertexts. Although he does not use the word

intertextuality, David Flusser in an article about *Hebrews* 3-4<sup>24</sup> offers a nice metaphor that can be used to describe the maximalistic view on intertextuality. He compares the relationships texts have with each other with the mycelium that connects the singular mushrooms in an underground network. Knowledge of these connections adds to the meaning. But just as the mycelium creates an ever growing circle of mushrooms, thus in the maximalistic view of intertextuality an always growing network of texts is created, which in the end will enclose our total reality.

It will be clear that for research the minimalistic view is hardly interesting, whereas the maximalistic understanding is unmanageable because it is a hopeless task. So a kind of position in between is asked for. In this midway position a description of relationships of texts is possible in terms of transformation. If there is no transformation it yields an identity of fenotext and architext. Examples of this identity are literal quotations whether marked as such or not. If there are transformations, these can be characterized as addition, deletion, transposition or replacement. In the case of allusions there are so many transformations that the reference to the architext is usually only implicitly expressed. But for the intertextual process of meaning these intertextual relations are no less interesting than others.

The description of intertextual relationships in terms of transformation could be called the syntax of intertextuality. The semantics of intertextuality deals with the meaning and the function of these transformations and non-transformations, whereas its pragmatics deals with the use of intertextuality in the process of communication.

## 2. An example: Psalm 94,7-11 in *Hebrews* 3,7-4,11

The New Testament writings have a high intertextual quality. This is especially the case in *Hebrews*. This writing is characterized by a large quantity of quotations from the Septuaginta. Moreover there is a lengthy treatment of the explanation and actualisation of scriptural data. Perhaps this is connected with the literary genre of *Hebrews*. In *Hebrews* itself the writing is indicated as a λόγος τῆς παρακλήσεως (*Hebrews* 13,22). Perhaps this indication has to be understood both in

<sup>24</sup> D. Flusser “‘Today if you will listen to His voice’. Creative Jewish Exegesis in *Hebrews* 3-4” in: *Journal for the study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* 59 (1988), pp. 55-62.

the sense of a word of exhortation and in the sense of a word of consolation.<sup>25</sup> This exhortation and consolation are reflected in a homily committed to paper with an accompanying letter. The way old testamentic data are dealt with in this homily is absolutely fascinating. Different names have been given to the textual approach as used in *Hebrews*, such as typology, comparative hermeneutic, creative rabbinical exegesis, and christological concentration. For our aim it is now important to see that the author of *Hebrews* is asking his readers to read the texts of the Old Testament in a special way. He not only quotes texts from the Old Testament but also explains them, and thus he provides insight into the process of reading he advocates.

## 2.1. *Syntaxis*

J.C. McCullough<sup>26</sup> discusses the differences in text between *Hebrews* 3,7-11 and Ps 94,7-11 (LXX).

1. There are some differences in the verbal forms. Ps 94,9 (LXX) has εἶδοσαν, whereas *Hebrews* 3,9 has εἶδον. In Ps 94,10 (LXX) the text is εἶπα, where *Hebrews* 3,10 has εἶπον. According to McCullough this kind of variants is common in the manuscripts of the LXX and he asserts that one can no longer determine if the author of *Hebrews* has found this in his text or that he has changed it himself. Although it is not a verbal form, McCullough also mentions that some manuscripts of the LXX have a different spelling for τεσσαράκοντα, but he does not say what this different spelling is.

2. *Hebrews* 3,9 has ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ, whereas Ps 94,9 has ἐδοκίμασαν. According to McCullough the original text in the Septuaginta is ἐδοκίμασεν [με]. He does not give arguments for the singular. The addition [με] can be supported from the manuscripts. If the version ἐδοκίμασαν or ἐδοκίμασεν [με] sounded strange in the ears of the author of *Hebrews*, the question can be asked why he substitutes this for a formula which is even more unusual (in the Septuaginta the word δοκιμασία only appears in Sirach 6,21 and in the New Testament only in *Hebrews* 3,9). Some have tried to explain this by saying that nowhere in the Septuaginta the verb is used in the sense of

<sup>25</sup> W.G. Übelacker, *Der Hebräerbrief als Appell. 1. Untersuchungen zu exordium, narratio und postscriptum, Hebr 1-2 und 13,22-25* (Lund, 1989), pp. 36-40.

<sup>26</sup> J.C. McCullough, *Hebrews and the Old Testament* (Diss. Queen's University, 1971); J.C. McCullough "The Old Testament Quotations in Hebrews" in: *New Testament Studies* 26 (1980), pp. 363-379.

tempting God. Another opinion is based on the fact that *bemasah* in Deut 33,8 is translated in the Septuaginta as ἐν πείρᾳ. This translation wants to maintain the meaning of the toponym. It is possible that in *Hebrews* 3,8 ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ is also an attempt to preserve the meaning of the name Massa, where according to the Old Testament traditions of Exodus 17,7 and 33,8 the temptation is located. However, according to McCullough the formula is used to prevent a repetition of synonyms with the same meaning. This would have been the case if ἐπείρασαν was followed by ἐδοκίμασαν. The transformation could go back to the text the author of *Hebrews* used, but it could also have been inserted by the author himself. The opinion that *Hebrews* 3,9 wants to preserve the meaning of the toponym Massa is attractive because of the context in *Hebrews*. For in the preceding section (3,1-6) the faithfulness of Moses and of Jesus has been mentioned. In this section Jesus is the example. That is clear from 3,1: Κατανοήσατε τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα τῆς ὁμολογίας ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν. In 3,7-4,11 the generation of the desert is a negative example for the addressees. That appears e.g. from 3,12: Βλέπετε, ἀδελφοί, μήποτε ἔσται ἔν τινι ὑμῶν καρδιά πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας ἐν τῷ ἀποστήναι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος. The unfaithfulness here mentioned is the opposite of the faithfulness of Moses and Jesus. There is a parallel with the conduct of the generation of the desert, indicated in the quotation by the word δοκιμασία. In such a context it is easily imaginable that the author of *Hebrews* wants to preserve the meaning of the toponym Massa and not so much the name itself. Moreover by the transformation a parallel between ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ and ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ has been established.

3. In Ps 94,10 (LXX) the text is τῇ γενεᾷ ἐκείνῃ, whereas *Hebrews* has τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ. Some manuscripts have ἐκείνῃ in *Hebrews* 3,10. This can be explained as influence from the text of the Septuaginta. Many commentators say that ἐκείνῃ was changed to ταύτῃ in order to fit the quotation better in its new context. McCullough mentions a stylistic reason. The formula with ἐκείνῃ is a hapax legomenon in the New Testament, where the formula with ταύτῃ is very common.

4. The last transformation concerns διό in *Hebrews* 3,10. In the text of the Septuaginta it is absent. The effect of the transformation is far-reaching. In the Septuaginta the forty years allude to the duration of God's anger, whereas in *Hebrews* they allude to the period in which the Israelites witnessed God's works. For this addition McCullough gives a stylistic reason. In the Hebrew text of Ps 94 there is a con-

struction of three elements: “they tempted me, they saw my works, I was angry for forty years.” The connection of the second and the third element is asyndetic. The Septuaginta takes over the asyndetic construction. The author of *Hebrews* with his Greek background wants to indicate the nature of the connection. As both the Massoretic text and the Septuaginta connect the first and the second element with “and”, the natural place for the causal connection indicated by διό is between the second and the third element. But in my view another explanation is possible. Several times in *Hebrews* quotations are presented as double quotations. Thus in *Hebrews* 10,38b καὶ separates the quotation from Hab 2,3 and the one of Hab 2,4. In *Hebrews* 1,8-9 the quotation from Ps 44,7-8 (LXX) is split by καί. Other examples are *Hebrews* 2,13 where Isaiah 8,17-18 is presented as two quotations and *Hebrews* 10,30 where Deut 32,35-36 is presented as two different quotations. In both places the quotation is interrupted by καὶ πάλιν. It could be asked if in 3,10 the same pattern is applied. In that case *Hebrews* 3,7-11 has to be considered as two quotations. The first is introduced by διό, καθὼς λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον. The second is likewise introduced by διό. In the first quotation the conduct of the people is described, in the second God’s reaction. By putting διό between the two quotations the conduct of the people is not described as a one-time event in the first quotation, but as a conduct lasting forty years. Anyway in the comment on the text it appears that God’s reaction is of the same duration. Thus in *Hebrews* 3,17 we read: Τίσιν δὲ προσώχθισεν τεσσεράκοντα ἔτη;

## 2.2. *Semantics*

It is best to situate Psalm 95 (LXX 94) at a pilgrimage to the temple. The second part of the psalm is directed at the pilgrims who entered the temple with their praises. They are confronted with a warning against the hardening of the heart. Here the time of Moses is called to mind, in which in spite of the deeds of salvation the people had their doubts (Ex 17,1-7; Num 20,1-15) and for which they were punished with the withdrawal of the promise of rest, that is the promise of Canaan. The oath, sworn by God that nobody is going to enter, is connected with the words of God in Num 14,21-22, where He says that nobody will see the land He has promised. God’s oath is a reaction to the grumbling of the people on account of the reports given by the scouts of the country. The purpose of this part of the



psalm is that the pilgrims may come to a self-examination about their faith or their hardness. Thus the psalm itself is already an example of intertextuality.

The exegesis of Ps 94,7-11 (LXX) in *Hebrews* 3,7-4,11 is typological by nature according to Friedrich Schröger.<sup>27</sup> It is called typological exegesis if single persons, historical events and cultic institutes of the Old Testament are seen as prefigurations of the Christ-related events. The typological exegesis starts with historical facts, but then it leaves the historical area and explains a new testamentic state of affairs with the help of Old Testament data.

To the proper nature of typology in *Hebrews* belongs the notion of the dignity of the new covenant above the old one. This dignity is expressed in the elevation of Christ. He is raised above the angels and above Moses. His priesthood is raised above the priesthood of the Old Testament priests and is comparable to the priesthood of Melchizedek. His sacrifice is more valuable than the sacrifices of the old covenant. His sacrifice establishes a new covenant that will remain valid for ever and therefore another sacrifice is no longer necessary.

This typology is also the presupposition of the exegesis of Ps 94 (LXX) in *Hebrews*. This is especially clear in the way the concept of κατάπαυσις is dealt with. This becomes particularly clear in connection with Gen 2,2<sup>28</sup>. It seems that *Hebrews* 4,3 should not be read in terms of the paulinic opposition between work and faith. This opinion of R. Jewett<sup>29</sup> leads to a very forced explanation of the text. The text itself indicates that the issue is about the opposition between ἔργα and κατάπαυσις. The phrase ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου prepares the quotation of Gen 2,2 in verse 4. The quotation of Gen 2,2 is introduced in the characteristic way of *Hebrews*. It is God who speaks the scripture-word: εἶρηκεν. The place where the scripture-word is to

<sup>27</sup> Fr. Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger* (Regensburg, 1968). See also Fr. Schröger "Das hermeneutische Instrumentarium des Hebräerbriefes" in: *Theologie und Glaube* 60 (1970), pp. 344-359; Fr. Schröger "Das hermeneutische Instrumentarium des Hebräerbriefverfassers" in: *Schriftauslegung. Beiträge zur Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments und im Neuen Testament* (München—Paderborn—Wien, 1972), pp. 313-329.

<sup>28</sup> See for this especially W. Weren " 'God rustte op de zevende dag'. De functie van Genesis 2,2 in Hebrëen 3,7-4,11" in: C. Verdegaal—W. Weren (eds), *Stromen uit Eden. Genesis 1-11 in bijbel, joodse exegese en moderne literatuur*. Liber Amicorum voor Prof. Dr. Niek Poulssen (Boxtel-Brugge, 1992), pp. 126-141. W. Weren, *Intertextualiteit en Bijbel* (Kampen, 1993), pp. 213-234.

<sup>29</sup> R. Jewett, *Letter to the Pilgrims. A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York, 1981).

be found is here indicated in a general way: *πov*. The content is also roughly indicated with the words *περὶ τῆς ἐβδόμης*. Then the quotation follows. In the Septuaginta the text is: *Καὶ κατέπαυσεν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ*. In the text of *Hebrews* two things are formulated in a different way. The first one is that *ὁ θεός* is inserted. It can be explained by supposing it was inserted to take away any doubts. But it also has a function in the way this text is discussed in the following context. The rest in Ps 94,11 (LXX) is, as I will show, the rest into which God himself has entered too (see verse 9 and 10). The insertion of *ὁ θεός* underscores this. The other transformation is that *τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ* is changed in *ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ*. This seems to me to be a transformation of a purely stylistic nature.

In his studies about the meaning of Gen 2,2 in the context of *Hebrews* Wim Weren shows that in the concept “rest” important transformations have been accomplished.<sup>30</sup> On the basis of the rabbinic interpretation rule *gezerah sawah* two scriptures have been linked which clarify each other on the strength of two or more identical words. The quotation from Gen 2,2 in verse 3 implies that the rest no longer means the promised land, but it is a rest available from the beginnings of the world. A new aspect is also that God’s sabbatical rest becomes accessible to the people and remains accessible to the people. Here we see another interpretation rule at work. It is the rule that we may conclude from the appearance of new things that the old ones disappear.<sup>31</sup> In *Hebrews* 4,7-8 we see this rule at work where *Hebrews* denies outright that Joshua ever entered the promised land. If this had happened, there would have been no need, so many years after the generation of the desert, for David to speak again about the “today” in which God is warning against the hardening of the heart that prevents man from entering into the rest.

That *σαββατισμός* and *κατάπαυσις* have the same meaning is clear from the parallel of verse 6 and verse 9 where substantially the same thing is pointed out. As the *κατάπαυσις* is meant for the people, so the *σαββατισμός* is meant for the people. Then in verse 10 it becomes

<sup>30</sup> W. Weren, “God rustte op de zevende dag”, pp. 136-138; W. Weren, *Intertextualiteit*, pp. 230-232.

<sup>31</sup> This rule is formulated in so many words in *Hebrews* 8,7 and 8,13: “Had the first covenant been faultless, there would have been no need to look for a second one in its place.” “By speaking of a new covenant, he has pronounced the first one old; and anything that is growing old and ageing will shortly disappear.”

really clear that God's own rest is meant. In this verse it is explicitly said, at least according to the majority of the commentators: "Anyone who enters God's rest". In this verse αὐτοῦ relates to God. An exception is the commentary of H. Braun<sup>32</sup>, who is of the opinion that it is related to the rest of the one who enters. However if understood as "God's rest", the rest gets the nature of eternity, and then the parallel of God and the people of God as indicated in verse 10 is meaningful; viz. the people are resting from their work as God is resting from his. The reference to Gen 2,2 becomes significant because with the help of this reference the eternal and divine character of the rest promised to the people is established. In the context of *Hebrews* the rest in Ps 94 (LXX) is no longer the promised land; the word now indicates a divine reality. The rest has now become the divine destination of the readers *Hebrews* has in mind.

### 2.3. *Pragmatics*

For the pragmatic dimensions of the intertextuality of Ps 94 (LXX) and *Hebrews* 3,7-4,11 the situation of the readers and the rhetorical situation are important. The rhetorical situation is described by W. Übelacker.<sup>33</sup> The rhetorical situation does not coincide with the actual, historical and social situation of the addressees. A rhetorical situation is a situation in which a person is called upon or feels called upon to give answers which might change the situation. The argumentative potential of the speaker and his expectations with regard to the audience play an important role. W. Übelacker gives the following reconstruction of the parenetic parts of *Hebrews*. In the longer parenetic passage of *Hebrews* 5,11-6,12 the author describes his addressees: they have got dull of hearing. Though by this time they ought to have been teachers, they still need someone to teach them the ABC of the words of God. In 13,7.17 there is the exhortation to obey the leaders. They are staying away from the meetings of the community (10,25). There are outlandish teachings (13,9). Typical for the addressees is their lack of faith and their doubts about the effectiveness of the sacrifice of Christ (9,1-10,18). For the author and for the readers the Old Testament seems to be an undisputable authority, but the readers do have their doubts about the position of the

<sup>32</sup> H. Braun, *An die Hebräer* (Tübingen, 1984).

<sup>33</sup> W.G. Übelacker, o.c.

Son. They put the visible above the invisible. They also struggle with the problem of why man has to endure suffering. The rhetorical situation is such that from the beginning the author has to reckon with some resistance from the readers. That is why W. Übelacker in his study investigates the rhetorical strategies the author uses to reach his purpose.

B. Lindars<sup>34</sup> describes the situation of the addressees on the basis of *Hebrews* 13. First of all *Hebrews* is a letter. This is often denied because of the beginning, but the end points this out very clearly. Also 13,19 indicates that the author writes from a distance and *Hebrews* is aimed to be read aloud. The text finishes with the blessing in 13,20-21. The author adds an ending written by himself and greetings. He calls the letter a word of exhortation (13,22). He makes a last appeal to get his view accepted. He shows the same concern in 13,8-19 where he asks people to pray for him. He will be absent for some time. In 13,17 it is clear that the addressees are a dissident group in the community (cf. also 13,1). It seems that in 13,17 there is an allusion to the reason why *Hebrews* was written. The leaders have written about the crisis to the author (a well-respected member of the community). Perhaps they hope that he is coming soon. But this is not possible and that is the reason why he is writing the letter.

Indications as to the nature of the crisis are given in 13,7-16. The leaders mentioned here are the ones who have evangelized. They are still known personally. The exemplary character of their lives is based on their faith. "Faith" does not point to the content of faith, but to the quality of their allegiance to the Christian confession. The addressees are tempted to take a path that does not agree with the gospel they have received. *Hebrews* 13,7-16 is difficult for us to interpret as we do not have a clear idea of the situation, but it is obvious that the author tries to influence the readers. Thus he reminds them in 13,8 of the basis of their faith: Jesus Christ. This may be an allusion to the primitive confession: "Jesus is the Christ." *Hebrews* 13,9 warns against strange teachings and food-laws which are useless. On the other hand in 13,10 an altar is mentioned from which those serving in the tent are not allowed to eat. The outlandish teaching could refer to the explanations about the sacrifice of expiation (*Hebrews* 9). The eating could refer to the meals in the synagogues on

<sup>34</sup> B. Lindars, *The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews* (Cambridge, 1991). See also B. Lindars "The rhetorical structure of Hebrews" in: *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989), pp. 382-406.

feast days, intended to strengthen the connection with the temple. The explanations in *Hebrews* imply that the ties built up with the Jewish congregation should be severed. This also implies the endurance of the hostility (13,13) of which Christ is the model (13,12). Important is also the participation in the meetings of the Christian community.

That more was hoped for from the meetings in the synagogues than from the Christian doctrine is connected with the awareness of sin. The underlying question is why the Christians have lost their faith in the expiatory death of Jesus. The *kerugma* the readers received was that of a total expiation of all sins. This expiation took place in the baptism. They expected to stay in grace till the *parousia*. When the reality of sin arises again, a problem comes up for which the Jewish liturgy finds good solutions, viz. the ritual of the Day of Atonement. Now the readers have to be convinced that Jesus' death has expiatory validity for their situation, too. That is why there are the explanations about the ritual of expiation Christ has executed which is valid for all times. This has to be communicated not only on the level of theory, but also on the level of Christian lifestyle. That is why *Hebrews* introduces its concept of faith in the sense of fidelity and perseverance. It also pertains to the situation of the readers being aware of persecutions (*Hebrews* 10,32-34 and 12,4).

Because of these data about the intended reader an eye must always be kept on the pragmatic aim and the rhetorical nature of *Hebrews*. The connection of explanation and paraenesis typical for *Hebrews* could be denoted as paraenetic oriented theology or as theologically founded paraenesis.

Likewise for the explanation and treatment of Ps 94,7-11 (LXX) in *Hebrews* 3,7-4,11 this situation of the readers and the rhetorical task faced by the author have consequences. This becomes especially apparent in the meanings of the word "today" in the context of *Hebrews*. One can distinguish a multiple "today". There is the "today" of the generation of the desert, a "today" that is already past. That is the "today" in the referential meaning of the psalm. During that "today" the generation of the desert has not entered the rest. In 4,6 the author explicitly indicates the reason for this is the disobedience of the generation of the desert. Then there is the "today" David speaks of. This "today" is determined again by God. This "today" was not realized at the moment David spoke of it. It is explained as a prophecy. The "today" is still an actual possibility for the readers. Accord-

ing to *Hebrews* 4,6 people can still enter into the rest. The “today” David speaks of, is therefore perceived as a promise and possible fulfilment. But that is not the only point. In the explanation of the psalm there is also a strong involvement in the actuality of the readers. This involvement appears especially in the paraenetic verses referring to Psalm 94,7-11 (LXX). This involvement is first of all negative. The readers are exhorted not to have a wicked and faithless heart leading to apostasy. This negative connection between psalm and readers is particularly indicated in verse 3,12. But the positive paranesis is also put into words. In 4,11 the readers are exhorted to enter into the rest which is God’s rest itself. The “today” of the psalm may even be exceptionally actual. *Hebrews* is seen to be a written homily. One can suppose that this homily was read aloud in an actual liturgical celebration. It is possible that psalm 94 (LXX) had a function in the celebration. In that case it is about a “today” the proclamation of which is still echoing in the ears of the readers.

After finishing our reader-oriented exegesis of the intertextuality between Psalm 94,7-11 and *Hebrews* 3,7-4,11 we find it unsatisfactory to characterize the relationship between the two texts as typological. We have seen different models of interpretation applied. We mention seven of them:

1. The scheme of promise and fulfilment is at work where it is about the “today” referred to by David and still present for the addressees.
2. In the interpretation of the “rest” the typical typology of *Hebrews* came to light which brings up the difference in quality between *typos* and *antitypos*. The text finishes with the mention of a divine and eternal rest.
3. It is not merely a difference in ontological quality as in a typological approach. The generation of the desert is rather an example that is not to be followed.
4. Rabbinic rules of interpretation are used, viz. the rule of *gezerah sawah*. With the help of one and the same catchword two texts are connected. The divine and eternal character of the rest can thus come to light through Genesis 2,2.
5. The view present in many places in *Hebrews*, viz. that out of the appearance of new things may be concluded the disappearance of the old ones, is at work where the objection that the people entered the promised land under Joshua is refuted.

6. The reading of biblical text *Hebrews* offers its readers, has to do with the current affairs of those readers.

7. The biblical texts the author of *Hebrews* is dealing with, are invested with divine authority. We saw this in the introduction of the quotation of Gen 2,2 in *Hebrews* 4,4. In *Hebrews*, Scripture is God's word.

# COMMUNICATION, ELOQUENCE AND ENTERTAINMENT IN AUGUSTINE'S *DE DOCTRINA CHRISTIANA*<sup>1</sup>

I. Sluiter

## 1. *Introduction*

The four books of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* provide instruction in how a Christian is to deal with the Bible, the *tractatio scripturarum*. A correct handling of Scripture is the only way to bring about, but also the only relevant evidence and criterion of, the perfect *paideia*, culture and education, of the Christian; knowing how to read the Bible and how to share this knowledge with others ultimately equals a life of sound Christian doctrinal convictions.<sup>2</sup> Both aspects resonate in the title of the work. This explains why Augustine, after having provided careful instruction, not so much in Christian doctrine, but in how to extract that doctrine from an often recalcitrant text, can yet put the two on a par in rounding off his work as follows (*ddc* IV xxxi 64 § 166):

Ego tamen deo nostro ago gratias quod in his quattuor libris non qualis ego essem,<sup>3</sup> cui multa desunt, sed qualis esse debeat qui in *doctrina sana*,

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<sup>1</sup> This is a revised version of a paper on *De doctrina christiana* read at the Nijmegen conference on "The Bible in Early Christianity", March 1996. A Dutch translation of *De doctrina christiana* by J. den Boeft and the author is presently in press.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chr. Schaublin, "De doctrina christiana: A Classic of Western Culture?", *De doctrina christiana. A Classic of Western Culture*, eds. Duane Arnold and Pamela Bright (Notre Dame, 1995), pp. 48; 53; for *ddc* as an *ars scripturarum*, *ibid.* 55. Marrou's view (H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris, 1938), p. 395) that *ddc* is Augustine's Christian reformation of pagan education is now being modified, and Augustine's own description of his project in *ddc* is taken more seriously.

<sup>3</sup> J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions* (3 vols) (Oxford, 1992), p. xlv n. 72, points out that Augustine alludes to *Conf.* 10.4.6 here. He connects Augustine's interruption of the writing of *De doctrina christiana* (at the end of III xxix 41 § 91) with a writer's block that was only resolved with the writing of the *Confessiones*. Ch. Kannengiesser, "The Interrupted *De doctrina christiana*", *De doctrina christiana. A Classic of Western Culture*, eds. Duane Arnold and Pamela Bright (Notre Dame, 1995), pp. 71f., explains it as the result of Augustine's struggle with the hermeneutics of Tyconius. Only when he had resolved that problem did he resume *De doctrina christiana*.



*id est christiana*, non solum sibi sed etiam aliis laborare studet,<sup>4</sup> quantulacumque potui facultate disserui.

But in any case I thank God that in these four books I have been able to discuss, with such ability as I have, not the sort of person that I am—for I have many failings—but the sort of person that those who apply themselves *to sound teaching, in other words Christian teaching*, on behalf of others as well as themselves, ought to be. (tr. Green)

*In doctrina sana*, ‘sound doctrine’ or ‘sound teaching’, quotes Titus 1:9,<sup>5</sup> and it is paraphrased so as to allude to the title of Augustine’s work, ‘Christian doctrine’ or ‘Christian teaching’ making the work come full circle from title to closing sentence.<sup>6</sup>

In a sense the difficulties posed by the interpretation of the title are key to a correct understanding of Augustine’s views on the relation between scripture and sound Christian doctrine. Scripture is our source for that doctrine, but the difficulties posed by Scripture seem to require a preliminary grasp of the doctrines, if one is to understand the text which conveys them. Augustine’s focus on the *tractatio scripturarum* places *De doctrina christiana* squarely in a long tradition of thinking about language and texts and the ways human beings find meaning, and look for knowledge in both.<sup>7</sup>

In this paper I will illustrate some salient aspects of *De doctrina christiana* by studying Augustine’s views on communication, eloquence and entertainment, three increasingly specialized and limited functions of language. Although there are strict limits to the level of insight that can be communicated through human language and teaching, Augustine insists that it is our duty at least to make the attempt to share any insight we have acquired ourselves (sections 2 and 3). The rest of the paper concentrates on *De doctrina christiana*

<sup>4</sup> The division *non solum sibi, sed etiam aliis* corresponds to the two parts of *ddc*, books I-III and book IV.

<sup>5</sup> The pastoral nature of the letter to Titus obviously makes it more relevant to book IV than to any of the previous ones, and indeed all seven quotations from it occur in book IV. Titus 1:9 occurs in two other places (IV xvi 33 § 92 and IV xxviii 61 § 156). In both, however, the emphasis is on the sequel to *in doctrina sana*, namely *contradicentes redarguere*, a justification for Christian eloquence.

<sup>6</sup> The first occurrence of the word *doctrina* after the title (*ddc* I ii 2 § 4) confirms the relevance of the *tractatio scripturarum*: *omnis doctrina vel rerum est vel signorum, sed res per signa discuntur*. The *res* of Christianity are primarily accessible through the *signa* of Scripture.

<sup>7</sup> See W. van Bakkum, J. Houben, I. Sluiter, K. Versteegh, *The Emergence of Semantics: the Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek and Arabic Linguistic Traditions* (Amsterdam-New York: John Benjamins, 1997).

itself, in particular on its exegetical principles (section 4) and its attitude towards rhetoric (section 5). In the fourth book of *De doctrina christiana*, Augustine goes into the contributions eloquence has to offer to the transmission of information and wisdom. I will look in particular at Augustine's adaptation of classical stylistic theory (section 6). Once the value of eloquence was recognized, it was a relatively small step also to allow the entertainment function of language as a reinforcement of the didactic process (section 7).

## 2. *Language, knowledge and communication*

Augustine's first formulation of the problematic relationship between language and knowledge is in the dialogue *De magistro*. The two most basic functions of language are to transmit knowledge and to recall information. The question is how it is possible for language to perform these functions. In the first half of the dialogue, it is argued that one cannot learn without signs, a system of transmission, a carrier of information. But the second half spells out the impasse: how does one acquire knowledge of the sign system itself? If from other signs, we are confronted with a *regressus ad infinitum*. Therefore, we can only learn the *signa* by means of the *res*, not the other way around (*De Mag.* X 33). Since we need prior knowledge in order to learn the sign system, it is impossible that language, the system of signs *par excellence*, can teach us anything essential.

This dilemma had a long history, its *locus classicus* being Plato's *Cratylus*. Augustine's solution is informed by his Christianity: the only true 'learning' is produced, not by an external teacher, but by internal illumination and revelation. Our internal teacher is the Word, Christ, who teaches by revealing reality to our minds, while at the same time providing us with the language we need to codify and understand that reality.<sup>8</sup> This makes a valuable instrument available to mankind, for language helps us to understand again and again what we know. In that sense it codifies the gift of understanding, and this provides language with a cognitive function. But even though information is laid down in such a notational system, that does not mean that such information, let alone a firm and insightful grasp of

<sup>8</sup> R.A. Markus, "St. Augustine on Signs", *Phronesis* 2 (1957), p. 69; cf. *De Mag.* XII 39.

it, can be effectively communicated purely by transmitting the relevant linguistic expressions. Words do not directly reveal thoughts (*De Mag.* XIII 44). However, communication through language is as close as we can get to actual 'teaching'. Although what we call teaching does not communicate the thoughts of the teacher, it can activate one's own internal sense of Truth. Therefore, although it is not the actual 'teaching' that is responsible for a favourable result, the effort of the teacher remains valuable (*De Mag.* XIV 45f.).

The relationship between language and thought is dealt with in *De Trinitate* XV x 17. It is possible to know something (*in notitia habere*) without actually thinking about it (*cogitare*), but the reverse is impossible: one cannot *cogitare* without *in notitia habere*.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, one can think (*cogitare*) without talking (*dicere*), but not the reverse. When speaking, there has to be a thought that is being expressed. In fact, although thoughts can also be conceived as visualisations, the predominant mode of thinking is discursive and consists of a dialogue with oneself, a concept going back to Plato's *Sophist* (263e3ff.). A thought can be verbalized in a certain specific language without being uttered, but there is a deeper, more fundamental level on which thoughts are conceived in a higher-order language, prior to any natural language (*De Trinitate* XV x 19). At this level the thought is a *verbum* that bears comparison with the *verbum par excellence*, the Word, Christ. Communication is the encoding of thought-language in an audible version (*De Trin.* XV xi 20),<sup>10</sup> and the ensuing decoding of this expression of the 'inner word' of the sender by the recipient of the message. The 'word that sounds outside' activates the 'inner word' of the recipient, and thus language is converted to thought again. In the earlier work *De doctrina christiana* (I xiii 12 § 26), Augustine describes the process of speech communication as follows:

Sicuti cum loquimur, ut id quod animo gerimus in audientis animum per aures carneas illabatur, fit sonus verbum quod corde gestamus, et locutio vocatur; nec tamen in eundem sonum cogitatio nostra convertitur, sed apud se manens integra formam vocis qua se insinuet auribus sine aliqua labe suae mutationis assumit. Ita verbum dei non commutatum caro tamen factum est ut habitaret in nobis.

<sup>9</sup>. Cf. also *De magistro* XI 37, where the priority of *in notitia habere* to any linguistic expression is stated. In this passage, Augustine proceeds to clarify the distinction between *intelligere* and *credere*: we believe everything we understand, but again the reverse is not true.

<sup>10</sup> Markus, "St. Augustine on Signs", p. 77.

When we speak, the word which we hold in our mind becomes sound in order that what we have in our mind may pass through ears of flesh into the listener's mind: this is called speech. Our thought, however, is not converted into the same sound, but remains intact in its own home, suffering no diminution from its change as it takes on the form of a word in order to make its way into the ears. In the same way the word of God suffered no change although it became flesh in order to live in us. (tr. Green)

Human communication consists in the transmission of 'what we have in mind' to another mind through the temporary physical medium of sound.<sup>11</sup> The inner word, i.e. the thought, remains intact and complete and is unchanged—it does not literally travel to the other person, so that it would no longer be with the first. In the era of the computer, the obvious analogy is that between the digital version of a text in the computer's memory, and the version in readable letters on the screen, that can be modified without changing the digital original. The superior nature of the 'inner word', and its immunity to change are important because of an analogy that is more obviously relevant to Augustine, namely to the Word incarnate. Christ's incarnation in no way detracts from his divinity, just like the hopeless imperfection and inadequateness of human language does not detract from the value of the thought that is being expressed. Interhuman communication is a process similar to the revelation of the Word.<sup>12</sup> In this passage, Augustine is not concerned with the possibility or impossibility of teaching and the bringing about of actual understanding in another person, but simply with the mechanics of speech communication. The passage does not, therefore, contradict the theory of *De Magistro*.

### 3. *Communication and teaching in De doctrina christiana*

In view of Augustine's thoughts on interhuman communication and the difficulties involved in teaching, an urgent preliminary question

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Augustine's description in *Conf.* I vi 8 of the communicative dilemma of an *infans*: *et voluntates meas volebam ostendere eis per quos implerentur, et non poteram, quia illae intus erant, foris autem illi nec ullo suo sensu valebant introire in animam meam*. Cf. also the trinity of the inner and outer man in *De Trin.* XI ii 2; XI iii 6, cf. B. Darrell Jackson, 'The Theory of Signs in St. Augustine' *De Doctrina christiana*, *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 15 (1969), p. 20.

<sup>12</sup> For Augustine's view on the inadequateness of human language, particularly in speaking of God, cf. e.g. *ddc* I vi 6 § 13f.

to the project of *De doctrina christiana* is obviously whether this *doctrina*, whatever its precise nature, can actually be brought about by the teaching activities of a human being, *in casu* the author himself. Will Augustine's *praecepta* guarantee the transmission of insight, or does true insight remain a gift of grace?<sup>13</sup> Is Augustine's project doomed to failure if it is impossible to transmit knowledge of and insight into the Scriptures from one human being to another?

Augustine deals with this question in the prooemium to the work, in which he addresses three groups of people who will potentially find fault with his project (*prooem.* i 2 § 3): those unable to understand Augustine's guidelines; those unable to apply them; and those who claim guidelines are redundant, since they themselves are doing just fine without them, because they derive their results directly from a *divinum munus* (*prooem.* i 4 § 7). This third group of 'charismatici' is obviously the most relevant for our question. Augustine offers two good reasons for disagreeing with their approach.<sup>14</sup>

Firstly, the fact that divine grace can confer any gift of knowledge does not mean that it invariably will, and that there is no point to human exertion. Most people, including the 'charismatici', learn to read and write from other people, even though it is both possible to understand Scripture while being illiterate (Antony) and to learn to read in a flash of divine inspiration (*prooem.* i 4 § 8). Similarly, most people learn to speak from other people, although the Apostles spoke in tongues under the influence of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (i 5 § 9f.). It would be an unlawful tempting of God to desist from doing whatever is within human power and to insist on waiting until He gave us whatever we wanted (i 5 § 11).

Secondly, there are numerous biblical parallels of divine injunctions to teach and learn *per homines* (i 6 § 12ff.; cf. e.g. i 6 § 13 *per homines hominibus*). In the first book of *De doctrina christiana*, Augustine makes a point that supports the usefulness and desirability of human exertion: Christ's incarnation and the 'foolishness of preaching' are

<sup>13</sup> Cf. C. Mayer, "'Res per signa'. Der Grundgedanke des Prologs in Augustins Schrift *De doctrina christiana* und das Problem seiner Datierung", *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 20 (1974), pp. 100-12; and against him, H.-J. Sieben, "Die 'res' der Bibel. Eine Analyse von Augustinus, *De doctr. christ.* I-III", *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 21 (1975), pp. 72-90.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. on this passage P. Brunner, "Charismatische und methodische Schriftauslegung nach Augustins Prolog zu *De doctrina christiana*", *Kerygma und Dogma* 1 (1955), pp. 59-69; 85-103.

divine ways to come to the aid of human frailty.<sup>15</sup> It is part of God's divine plan of salvation that people hear God's word through other people. Therefore, not only is it reasonable to assume that one can get some kind of result at least some of the time in this way, but one also has the moral obligation to make an effort, even though the result cannot be guaranteed.<sup>16</sup> That Augustine anticipates and is resigned to a less than perfect result is apparent from his addressing the first two groups of potentially disgruntled readers of his work. There will be people who will simply fail to understand what he is saying, and there will be people who will be unable to get any results in actual Biblical interpretation out of Augustine's guidelines. Those people will have to pray for divine enlightenment, because human exertion has failed to help them out (*proem.* i 3 § 5f.).

All of this means that there is no discrepancy between Augustine's views in *De Magistro* and those in *De doctrina christiana*. In both works Augustine acknowledges the limitations of human language and human reason.<sup>17</sup> In that respect the opening sentences of *De doctrina christiana* are significant and programmatic, in spite of their seemingly topical character (*ddc proem.* i 1):

Sunt praecepta quaedam tractandarum scripturarum quae studiosis video non incommode posse tradi, ut non solum legendo alios qui divinarum litterarum opera aperuerunt, sed etiam ipsi aperiendo proficiant. Haec tradere institui volentibus et valentibus discere, si dominus ac deus noster ea quae de hac re cogitanti solet suggerere, etiam scribenti mihi non deneget.

There are certain rules for interpreting the scriptures which, as I am well aware, can usefully be passed on to those with an appetite for such study to make it possible for them to progress not just by reading the work of others who have illuminated the obscurities of divine literature, but also by finding illumination for themselves. It is my intention to communicate these rules to those with the will and the wit to learn, if my Lord and God does not withhold from me, as I write, those things he regularly supplies as I reflect on these matters. (tr. Green)

<sup>15</sup> *Per stultitiam praedicationis*, *ddc* I xii 12 § 24f., cf. I Cor. 1:21.

<sup>16</sup> Augustine returns to this matter in *ddc* IV xvi 33 § 90-95; cf. A. Primmer, "The Function of the *genera dicendi* in *De doctrina christiana* 4", *De doctrina christiana. A Classic of Western Culture*, eds. Duane Arnold and Pamela Bright (Notre Dame, 1995), p. 77.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. K.-H. Uthemann, "Bemerkungen zu Augustins Auffassung der Predigt. Signal einer kulturellen Wende", *Augustinianum* 36 (1996), pp. 164ff.

It seems less likely that Augustine is afraid that things he used to think about will now slip his mind, than that he fears the withdrawal of divine help in translating his thoughts into understandable writing, thought-language into natural language. Interestingly, Augustine also illustrates the program of *De doctrina christiana* as a whole with this statement, which can be taken as a description of his operating procedure as an author: first he had to think out his subject (*cogitanti*), then he had to write it down and pass it on (*scribenti*). *De doctrina christiana*, of course, is divided into two corresponding parts, according to the natural division of the *tractatio scripturarum*. The first three books deal with the *modus inveniendi quae intellegenda sunt* (*ddc* I i 1 § 1), the fourth with the *modus proferendi quae intellecta sunt* (*ibid.*). First one has to 'find what we need to understand'—this corresponds to the activities of the dialectician, or to what a rhetorician does in his *inventio*. The next stage is to pass on what it is you have understood—corresponding with the activities of the rhetorician. Augustine has clearly followed his own two-tiered model. In any case, both stages are crucially dependent on divine help and illumination (*si dominus ac deus noster ea quae ... cogitanti solet suggerere, etiam scribenti mihi non deneget*).<sup>18</sup>

#### 4. *De doctrina christiana: the principles of exegesis*

Before discussing Augustine's views on effective communication or Christian eloquence in Book IV of *De doctrina christiana*, let me briefly summarize the content of the first three books and the exegetical principles laid down in them. These principles are inextricably bound up with the tenets of Christian faith. The three books dealing with the *modus inveniendi* successively deal with the *res* of Christianity (book I) and the *signa*, which refer to them and by whose means the *res* can be accessed.<sup>19</sup> Book II explains how to get a grip on *signa ignota*, signs not yet known, both when used literally and figuratively. Book III performs the same service for the *signa ambigua*, non-univocal signs. The *res* of *De doctrina christiana* are the nucleus of Christian

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *ddc* IV xv 32 § 89.

<sup>19</sup> On Augustinian sign theory, see Markus, "St. Augustine on Signs"; Jackson, "The Theory of Signs in St. Augustine' *De Doctrina christiana*"; M. Baratin, "Les origines stoïciennes de la théorie Augustinienne du signe", *Revue des Etudes Latines* 59 (1981), pp. 260-8.

faith: God, Christ, and Holy Spirit (I v 5 § 10ff.); the Church (I xvi 15 § 33ff.); life after death (I xix 18 § 36ff.). Unlike all the *res* that human beings use (*uti*) in trying to become happy (*beatus*), these are *res* that actually do make human beings happy. We do not just use them, but rather we enjoy (*frui*) them for their own sakes (I iv 4 § 8; xxii 20 § 39).

The ultimate exegetical principle is that any explanation should be compatible with the command to love God and one's neighbour, the *regula dilectionis* (I xxii 21 § 42; xxxv 39 § 84ff.). In interpreting a metaphorical passage, one needs to consider it over and over again until one's interpretation is within the domain of *caritas* (*ddc* III xv 23 § 54). *Caritas* is the *finis praecepti* (I xxxvi 41 § 88; I xl 44 § 95; cf. I xxxv 39 § 84), and the terminus of interpretation. It is crucial not to decide that one has reached this terminus too early, since in that case one would commit the vital error of enjoying for its own sake (*frui*) what should have been used (*uti*) to reach an ulterior goal.<sup>20</sup> Although strictly speaking *caritas* is the goal of exegesis, in practice it comes to function as a criterion for correct interpretation. This makes Augustine the father of the term that designates the hermeneutical 'principle of charity'.<sup>21</sup> Interpretation in this case is based on an attitude predicated on Christian faith.

The very structure of *De doctrina christiana*, starting from the *res* and only then discussing the *signa*, illustrates the hermeneutical circle which is explicitly being addressed in this work: the *res* constitute the answers to the exegetical questions raised by the Bible. These answers are spelled out, before problems of interpretation are dealt with in any detail.<sup>22</sup> Augustine points out that in the slow seven-phase ascent from *timor dei* to the seventh and highest stage *sapientia*, the material of *De doctrina christiana* belongs to the third stage, that of human *scientia* (*ddc* II viii 12 § 24). Significantly, the stage preceding *scientia* is that of *pietas*, which is briefly characterized by the slogan *credere et cedere*, to believe and give way (*ddc* II vii 10 § 19). *Scientia* presupposes *pietas*, not the other way around.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. R.A. Markus, "Signs, Communication, and Communities in Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*", *De doctrina christiana. A Classic of Western Culture*, eds. Duane Arnold and Pamela Bright (Notre Dame, 1995), pp. 101f.

<sup>21</sup> See I. Sluiter, "Metatexts and the Principle of Charity", *Metahistoriography. Theoretical and Methodological Aspects in the Historiography of Linguistics*, eds. Peter Schmitter and M.J. van der Wal (Münster: Nodus Publikationen 1998), pp. 11-27.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Uthemann, "Bemerkungen zu Augustins Auffassung der Predigt. Signal einer kulturellen Wende", pp. 166f.



5. De doctrina christiana IV: *Christian eloquence and pagan rhetoric*

Obviously, the fourth book of *De doctrina christiana*, dealing as it does with the *modus proferendi*, the communication of the insights acquired by the speaker or writer,<sup>23</sup> is of eminent interest for Augustine's ideas on effective human communication and teaching *homines per homines*. Augustine defines Christian eloquence against the backdrop of pagan rhetoric, which serves as a foil,<sup>24</sup> but he emphatically denies that he is teaching Christian rhetoric here (IV i 2 § 3). His claim is that rhetoric,<sup>25</sup> as the theory of eloquence, is dependent on the existence of eloquent examples to analyse (IV vii 21 § 60), but that it is perfectly possible to be eloquent and develop a natural style without clinging to any particular theoretical tenets. Most of rhetoric's ideas are just common-sensical anyway—which means that common-sense practice will just happen to coincide with the rules of theory (IV iv 6-7 § 14ff., esp. 16). Even though rhetoric itself is ultimately not a worthwhile object of study, there is no reason why one should deny Christian discourse the benefits of a good and strong style (IV ii 3 § 4):<sup>26</sup>

Nam cum per artem rhetoricam et vera suadeantur et falsa, quis audeat dicere adversus mendacium in defensoribus suis inermem debere consistere veritatem, ut videlicet illi qui res falsas persuadere conantur, noverint auditorem vel benevolum vel intentum vel docilem proemio facere, isti autem non noverint? Illi falsa breviter, aperte, verisimiliter et isti vera sic narrent ut audire taedeat, intellegere non pateat, credere postremo non libeat? Illi fallacibus argumentis veritatem oppugnent, asserant falsitatem, isti nec vera defendere nec falsa valeant refutare? Illi animos audientium in errorem moventes impellentesque dicendo terreant, contristent, exhilarant, exhortentur ardentem, isti pro veritate lenti frigidi dormitent? Quis ita desipiat ut hoc sapiat? Cum ergo sit in medio posita facultas eloquii, quae ad persuadenda seu prava seu recta valet plurimum, cur non bonorum studio comparatur, ut militet veritati, si eam mali ad obtinendas perversas vanasque causas in usus iniquitatis et erroris usurpant?<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Book IV does not only deal with communication in sermons, but also in other circumstances, cf. IV ix 23 § 63; x 25 § 67.

<sup>24</sup> This goes in particular for Cicero's *Orator*, the main text engaged by Augustine. Cicero also denies that he is teaching rhetoric in his *Orator*: *Or.* 43; 112, cf. 117.

<sup>25</sup> This claim is not new. Quintilian points out that the classification of figures of speech is based on observation of actual use (Quint. 8.6.4, cf. *ddc* III xxix 41 § 91).

<sup>26</sup> For the notion that the ideas underlying rhetoric are neutral in the opposition between pagans and Christians, and that their evaluation depends on the use that is being made of them, cf. Chr. Gnllka, XPHΕΙΣ. *Die Methode der Kirchenväter im Umgang mit der antiken Kultur. I. Der Begriff des rechten Gebrauchs* (Basel-Stuttgart, 1984). See also *ddc* II xxxvi 54 § 132.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. II xxxvi 54 § 132.

Since rhetoric is used to give conviction to both truth and falsehood, who could dare maintain that truth, which depends on us for its defence, should stand unarmed in the fight against falsehood? This would mean that those who are trying to give conviction to their falsehoods would know how to use an introduction to make their listeners favourable, interested, and receptive, while we would not; that they would expound falsehoods in descriptions that are succinct, lucid, and convincing, while we would expound the truth in such a way as to bore our listeners, cloud their understanding, and stifle their desire to believe; that they would assail the truth and advocate falsehood with fallacious arguments, while we would be too feeble either to defend what is true or refute what is false; that they, pushing and propelling their listeners' minds towards error, would speak so as to inspire fear, sadness, and elation, and issue passionate exhortations, while we, in the name of the truth, can only idle along sounding dull and indifferent. Who could be so senseless as to find this sensible? No, oratorical ability, so effective a resource to commend either right or wrong, is available to both sides; why then is it not acquired by good and zealous Christians to fight for the truth, if the wicked employ it in the service of iniquity and error, to achieve their perverse and futile purposes? (tr. Green)

This defence of a Christian version of speaking well is itself eminently rhetorical in nature, both as a practical sample of persuasive and cultivated discourse and because it betrays Augustine's familiarity with standard rhetorical theory—not surprising in this former professor of rhetoric.<sup>28</sup> Its structure is striking because of the series of rhetorical questions structured by the opposition between *illi* and *isti*, the tricola and climax-structures, and the pervasive military metaphors.<sup>29</sup> The theory it alludes to is that of the parts of a speech, with their characteristic goals and stylistic properties. The *prooemium* serves to make the audience favourably disposed, interested and willing to learn (*benevolus, attentus, docilis*). The statement of the facts of the case (*narratio*) should be concise, clear and it should impress the audience as being probable (*breviter, aperte, verisimiliter*). The *argumentatio* consists of two parts: a positive one in which the speaker presents the arguments supporting his case (*asserere*), and a negative one in which he refutes those of his opponents (*refutare*). And finally, in the *peroratio*, he will appeal to the emotions of his audience, the main ones being fear, sorrow and joy (*terreant, contristent, exhilarent*), and exhort them to action.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Cic. *Or.* 122.

<sup>29</sup> E.g. *defensoribus, inermem, oppugnent, defendere, ut militet veritati*.

<sup>30</sup> For the theories about the parts of speech and their function and characteristics, cf. H. Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* (München, 1960), § 263 ff. (*exordium*); 289ff. (*narratio*); 348ff. and 430 (*argumentatio*); 431 ff. (*peroratio*).

The Christian speaker should not be denied the benefit of any of these elements, but the crucial point is that formal rhetorical training is not the only way to achieve oratorical proficiency. What the Christian speaker needs above all is familiarity with good examples, and practice—again Augustine can make use of a distinction with a long tradition: that between *ars* (theory), *ingenium* (natural ability), and *usus/exercitatio* (training).<sup>31</sup> Augustine emphasizes a combination of natural ability with immersion in good examples and practising to imitate them. The structure of the rest of Book IV is in line with this approach. The more theoretical passages are relatively short and are either prompted by, or as soon as possible supplemented and replaced with, extensive sample passages from the Bible, both from the Old and New Testaments, and from non-Biblical Christian authors. Quoting these passages is an integral part of Augustine's argument and method, and cannot solely be explained as an apologetical trick to legitimize eloquence as a goal for a Christian.<sup>32</sup>

Most importantly, however, although Augustine is clear that eloquence can be an important enrichment in trying to communicate wisdom and insight, he is equally clear about the relative value of eloquence and wisdom. Ultimately, eloquence is entirely dispensable, although the combination of wisdom and eloquence is always better than wisdom alone. but eloquence without wisdom is an abomination (IV v 7 § 17ff.).

#### 6. *Theory of style—functions of discourse—effect on the audience*

The most theoretical part of book IV, which is most obviously indebted to the classical theory of rhetoric, is Augustine's discussion of the three functions of Christian eloquence: *docere*, *delectare* and *flectere*, and the three corresponding styles, the *genus summissum*, *genus temperatum* and *genus grande*.<sup>33</sup> Interestingly, up to the introduction of

<sup>31</sup> Cf. IV iii 4 § 6ff.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. P. Prestel, *Die Rezeption der ciceronischen Rhetorik durch Augustinus in 'de doctrina christiana'* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992), p. 198 against Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*.

<sup>33</sup> From IV xii 27 § 74 onwards. Cf. E. Auerbach, *Literatursprache und Publikum in der lateinischen Spätantike und im Mittelalter* (Bern, 1958), p. 29. The first place in book IV where the styles and the corresponding types of stylistic failures are mentioned implicitly is IV v 7 § 17: *cum alii faciunt obtuse, deformiter, frigide, alii acute, ornate, vehementer*. Cf. Prestel, *Die Rezeption der ciceronischen Rhetorik durch Augustinus in 'de doctrina christiana'*, p. 159; Primmer, "The Function of the *genera dicendi* in *De doctrina christiana* 4", p. 78.

these elements from the technical tradition, Augustine had treated Christian eloquence as equivalent to teaching (*docere*),<sup>34</sup> the mode of communication that had been at the center of Augustine's linguistic interest in *De Magistro* and *De Trinitate* as well.<sup>35</sup> But the term *docere* now acquires a more limited and precise meaning, as one part only of the full range of the functions of language, which also include entertainment and emotional manipulation. The analysis of the functions of discourse allows Augustine to strengthen the coherence of *De doctrina christiana* once more, in that at least initially *docere* is linked with the *res*, while the other two are dependent on our mode of expression, and therefore belong to the level of the *signa* (IV xii 27 § 74). In his elaboration of the theory, Augustine will also have to address the stylistic features of the function *docere*, i.e. its *signum* level; on the other hand—as we will see (section 7)—he will also pay attention to the grounding in extra-linguistic factors of the function *delectare*. For now, it is obvious that *delectare* in particular has potentially dangerous implications, and it is striking that Augustine hastens to emphasize the overruling ethical foundation and content of Christian eloquence.<sup>36</sup> I will return to this aspect of entertainment in the last part of this paper, but first we must explore the ramifications of the tripartite function that is here ascribed to discourse.

In the classical system of rhetoric (as exemplified by Cicero's *Orator*) the choice of stylistic level was determined by the topic of discourse. Is the topic an everyday one, then the stylistic level should be simple, is the topic grandiose, then the style should be elevated, and for anything in between the intermediate style is the right choice (IV xvii 34 § 96). Augustine points out that the fundamental truths of

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Prestel, *Die Rezeption der ciceronischen Rhetorik durch Augustinus in 'de doctrina christiana'*, p. 267.

<sup>35</sup> For *docere* as the central function of language, cf. Plat. *Crat.* 388b12; 388c6f.; Ar. *Rhet.* III 2.1404b2f.

<sup>36</sup> IV xiv 30 § 81ff., esp. § 83 *iusta, non iniqua libenter audiantur. Quod utique non fieret nisi suaviter dicerentur*; xv 32 § 87 *noster iste eloquens cum iusta et sancta et bona dicit*; xvii 34 § 96 *dicendo persuadere quod bonum est*; xxviii 61 § 157 *veris tamen rebus*. The theme is already sounded in IV iv 6 § 14 *debet igitur divinarum scripturarum tractator et doctor ... et bona docere et mala dedocere*. Cf. also *contra Cresc.* 1,1,2 *eloquentia vero facultas dicendi est congruenter explicans quae sentimus, qua tunc utendum est cum recta sentimus*. Fr. Weissengruber, "Augustins Wertung von Grammatik und Rhetorik im Traktat *contra Cresconium*", *Hermes* 105 (1977), p. 115. Again, there is a long tradition in rhetorical theory of the ethical dimension of the true rhetorician, from Plato's *Gorgias* (e.g. 508c1-2) to Cato's definition of the orator as a *vir bonus dicendi peritus*; cf. *ad Herenn.* 1,2,2 *oratoris officium est de iis rebus posse dicere quae res ad usum civilem moribus et legibus constitutae sunt cum assensione auditorum, quoad eius fieri poterit*.

Christian faith are invariably of the utmost importance, yet have to be disclosed in an easily comprehensible language. Therefore the status of the subject matter can no longer determine the choice of one style over another. According to Augustine, stylistic level should correspond to the dominant function of discourse in any given passage.<sup>37</sup> If this is to teach, one should choose the simple style, if praise or blame are dominant, the 'blended' or middle style is indicated,<sup>38</sup> if the purpose is to bring about a certain action, the high style is to be applied (IV xix 38 § 104). Augustine recommends mixing the styles (such a mixed passage will still be labeled by the name of the dominant one) (IV xxii 51 § 134f.) and insists that the eloquent speaker will also at all times try to achieve every relevant effect in his audience, that they understand what he says, take pleasure in listening, and obey.<sup>39</sup>

Whereas *docere*, *delectare* and *flectere* stress the activity of the speaker, *intellegenter/libenter/oboedienter audiri* describe the speaker as the object of a certain mode of perception in the audience. At first sight, one might think that there should be a primary link between *docere* and *intellegenter audiri*, between *delectare* and *libenter audiri*, and between *flectere* and *oboedienter audiri*,<sup>40</sup> but just as Augustine had insisted on disrupting the fixed combinations of subject-matter and style, so he denies that a certain type of effect should exclusively be brought about by a certain style. Rather, it is important to aim at all three effects of *intellegenter*, *libenter* and *oboedienter audiri*, whichever style one happens to be using (IV xxvi 56 § 145ff.).

In fact, the triad *intellegenter*, *libenter* and *oboedienter audiri* masks a Ciceronian (and older) classification which is related to, but in fact at least originally essentially different from that of *docere*, *delectare* and

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Auerbach, *Literatursprache und Publikum in der lateinischen Spätantike und im Mittelalter*, p. 33.

<sup>38</sup> For *laudare* and *vituperare* as the subject matter of discourse with the main function of *delectare*, cf. IV xix 38 § 104: *et tamen cum doctor iste debeat rerum dictor esse magnarum, non semper eas debet granditer dicere, sed summis cum aliquid docetur, temperate cum aliquid vituperatur sive laudatur*; xxiv 54 § 141ff.; xxvi 57 § 149. Praise and blame are typical of the genre of epideictic rhetoric, which is primarily meant to entertain (cf. Cic. Or. 37).

<sup>39</sup> The three effects are introduced in IV xv 32 § 87. Cf. Primmer, "The Function of the *genera dicendi* in *De doctrina christiana* 4", p. 75.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. IV xvii 34 § 96 where such a link could be taken to be implicit, but is not in fact made, even though Augustine spells out all the other possible parallelisms in this section. We must assume that the exclusive link was never intended. Its explicit denial follows in IV xxvi 56 § 145.

*movere/flectere*. Confusingly, two out of the three elements (*docere* and *flectere/movere*) are designated by the same words, but the third one is called *conciliare* rather than *delectare*. Although the two classifications are easily and frequently mixed up both in ancient and modern interpreters,<sup>41</sup> they serve quite different purposes. *Docere*, *delectare* and *flectere/movere* (the *delectare* group) are the main functions of discourse, and the main tasks of the orator. As such, they belong in discussions of *elocutio*. *Docere*, *conciliare* and *movere/flectere* (the *conciliare* group) are the three major categories of means of persuasion, which pervade any form of rhetorical discourse. Planning and finding these means of persuasion belongs to the stage of *inventio*. A speaker or writer is persuasive, either because he uses logical arguments and demonstrations (*docere*), or because he seems a trustworthy person and inspires belief (*conciliare*, 'ethos'), or because he sweeps his audience off their feet by appealing to their emotions (*flectere/movere*, 'pathos').<sup>42</sup> The discrepancy is greatest when one compares *delectare* and *conciliare*: *delectare* is one of the tasks of the orator and one of the main functions of discourse; it means that one should entertain or delight one's audience and give them pleasure by one's use of language, which makes it a function of *elocutio*. *Conciliare* is a means of persuasion;<sup>43</sup> it means that one should make a sympathetic and reliable impression on the audience as a person.

That the three types of style cannot be mapped on to these three means of persuasion is clear from Cicero's *Orator*, where both classifications turn up side by side.<sup>44</sup> In fact, Cicero says with so many words that although *docere* is the main means of persuasion, the two

<sup>41</sup> E.g. in Quint. 12.10.59 *delectare* and *conciliare* are simply identified with each other.

<sup>42</sup> E.g. Cic. *De Or.* 2, 115 *ita omnis ratio dicendi tribus ad persuadendum rebus est nixa: ut probemus vera esse quae defendimus, ut conciliemus eos nobis qui audiunt, ut animos eorum ad quemcumque causa postulabit motum vocamus*; 2,310 (Antonius, talking about *dispositio*): *et quoniam ... tribus rebus homines ad nostram sententiam perducimus, aut docendo aut conciliando aut permovendo, una ex tribus his rebus res prae nobis est ferenda, ut nihil aliud nisi docere velle videamur, reliquae duae, sicuti sanguis in corporibus, sic illae in perpetuis orationibus fusae esse debent*; J. Wisse, *Ethos and Pathos from Aristotle to Cicero* (Amsterdam, 1989), p. 201; 206 with n. 56; cf. also 2,212. The three means of persuasion are already distinguished in Ar. *Rhet.* I 2.1356a1ff.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Cic. *De Or.* 2.115. *Conciliare* can also be used more specifically for a function of the *prooemium* (cf. *ddc* II xxxvi 54 § 132 and IV iv 6 § 14, on which see below). Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik*, § 271 δ α'; 277 α; 278; 287.

<sup>44</sup> Or. 69; 128ff.; Wisse, *Ethos and Pathos from Aristotle to Cicero*, p. 214. The three functions *docere*, *delectare* and *movere* can be (and are) correlated with the three styles, cf. Wisse, *ibid.* p. 212ff. with the table on p. 218.

others should always play a role as well.<sup>45</sup> In other words, at the level of the persuasive effect on the audience, the three means of persuasion should be active throughout the discourse. This is the very injunction Augustine gives in IV xxvi 56 § 145ff. It seems likely, therefore, that Augustine had this competing classification of the three means of persuasion in mind when he separated style and 'effect'. This also explains why the discussion there focuses on the relevance of someone's life and conduct for the effectiveness of their teaching, a typical topic to be discussed in the context of the means of persuasion 'ethos'.<sup>46</sup> However, none of this means that Augustine himself was necessarily entirely aware of the original difference in function and theoretical status (as part of *inventio* and part of *elocutio*) of the two competing classifications of the *delectare* group and the *conciliare* group. Quintilian had identified the two (see note 41) and Augustine himself used *conciliare* in a context which seems to suffer from some slippage between the two systems.<sup>47</sup>

### 7. *The use of entertainment*

Once *docere* had been replaced with the three functions *docere*, *delectare* and *movere/flectere*, Augustine was forced to confront the entertainment function of language, a category that must have looked suspicious to him.<sup>48</sup> Condemnations of the *fucus*, the idle and vain embell-

<sup>45</sup> *De Or.* 2,310, see note 40 above.

<sup>46</sup> IV xxvii 59 § 151. Note that Augustine emphasizes the *de facto* conduct of life rather than the impression of reliability that is to be created in the context of the speech or sermon. Cf. G.A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill, 1980), p. 157; G.A. Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton, 1994), p. 269. Quint. 12.1.1-3 equally emphasizes the genuine moral character of the speaker. It seems likely that Augustine is also influenced here by a topos of exegetical literature, namely the relevance of someone's life to his teaching and v.v. Cf. J. Mansfeld, *Prolegomena. Questions to be settled before the study of an author or a text* (Leiden, 1994), pp. 122ff.; 183; 186 (οἷος ὁ τρόπος, τοιοῦτος ὁ λόγος). For an early example cf. Plato's *Laches* 188d5ff.

<sup>47</sup> IV iv 6 § 14 *in hoc opere sermonis conciliare aversos, remissos erigere, nescientibus quod agitur quid expectare debeant intimare*. The phrase *in hoc opere sermonis* suggests that the following three elements will be dispersed throughout the whole speech (and are therefore to be identified with the three means of persuasion). But in fact, the sequel makes it likely that Augustine was (also) thinking of the particular function of the prooemium, in which *conciliare* has a more limited role.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Prestel, *Die Rezeption der ciceronischen Rhetorik durch Augustinus in 'de doctrina christiana'*, p. 173.

ishments of pagan sophistry, were a topos in early Christian literature. The *lingua piscatoria*, instantiated by the Bible, should suffice for a Christian, and clarity should take precedence, not only over empty showmanship, but even over a rigid application of the rules of grammar.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, Augustine follows up the explicit introduction of the three styles (IV xii 27 § 74) by a warning about the dangers of the idle pursuit of beauty and the importance of moral virtue (IV xiv 30 § 81ff.),<sup>50</sup> and he does not shrink from illustrating the possible excesses by quoting a Christian author, Cyprian (IV xiv 31 § 84f.).

But although he is vividly aware of the inherent dangers, he had in fact already prepared for a more favourable reception of this function of discourse in the preceding books of *De doctrina christiana*, by alerting the reader to the presence in Biblical language of elements that primarily serve to entertain or delight the reader or listener. The Song of Songs, for instance, with its pregnant figurative language *delectat audientem*, more than a direct *exposé* about the Church—symbolized by the bride in the Song of Songs—would have done (II vi 7 § 11). The symbolic form is *suavius* (ibid.), and the use of similes and a certain level of difficulty increase the pleasure of learning (*libentius, gratius*, II vi 8 § 13).<sup>51</sup> Language consisting of *signa translata* obviously makes use of figures and tropes, which is in itself a characteristic of the *genus temperatum*, the main producer of *delectatio*.<sup>52</sup> Without mentioning the corresponding stylistic level yet, Augustine describes this effect for instance in book III, while explaining how to decide whether a text is to be interpreted literally or figuratively. A figurative interpretation is indicated whenever the literal one would result in something criminal or scandalous—note how once again the desirable result of the interpretation is laid down in advance. This applies in particular to the description of communion, eating the body of the

<sup>49</sup> Cf. H. Hagendahl, "Piscatorie et non aristotelice. Zu einem Schlagwort bei den Kirchenvätern", *Septentrionalia et Orientalia. Studia B. Karlgren dedicata* (Stockholm, 1959), pp. 184-93; *ddc* IV x 24 § 64.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Prestel, *Die Rezeption der ciceronischen Rhetorik durch Augustinus in 'de doctrina christiana'*, p. 161; 173. See already IV v 8 § 23 *perniciosa dulcedo*.

<sup>51</sup> Other instances where Augustine attributes *delectatio* to a Biblical text, e.g. IV vii 13 § 36. For the delights of *obscuritas*, see R. Williams, "Language, Reality and Desire in Augustine's *de doctrina*", *Literature & Theology* 3 (1989), p. 142.

<sup>52</sup> See e.g. IV vii 15 § 48, where the kick of recognizing and understanding the tropologia of the Old Testament yields this very effect of *delectatio*. The term used here is *dulcescunt*. For the *ornatus* of the *genus temperatum*, see IV vii 17 § 52 *luminibus ornatur*. Elsewhere the effect is called *pulchrum* (IV vii 18 § 54; vii 20 § 58).



Son of Man, and drinking His blood (e.g. Joh. 6:53) (*ddc* III xvi 24 § 55):

Figura ergo est, praecipiens passioni dominicae esse communicandum et suaviter atque utiliter recondendum in memoria, quod pro nobis caro eius crucifixa et vulnerata sit.

and so it is figurative, a command to participate in the Lord's passion and to store in our memory the pleasurable and useful knowledge that his flesh was crucified and wounded for our sake. (tr. Green)

The figurative locution is didactically appropriate in that it is more attractive and appealing to memorize and remember (*suaviter*).

Augustine is clear in his rejection of pagan and Christian misappropriations of the entertainment function of discourse.<sup>53</sup> But the crucial point is that in principle this holds for all functions: eloquence (or rhetoric) is good or bad according to the use that is being made of it. This is just the logical conclusion from the statement that the faculty of speech is in itself neutral terrain (see above, *ddc* IV ii 3 § 4).

Therefore, Augustine can feel free to develop the entertainment aspect of discourse in book IV, always emphasizing as the true source of *delectatio* the unique appropriateness of biblical language (IV x 28 § 29f.). The temperate style is especially suited to bring about *delectatio*. Its characteristic use of figures and tropes makes it beautiful,<sup>54</sup> and it particularly lends itself to narrating something that is already understood, for the simple pleasure of the narration itself. Therefore, in this case form is more effective than content (IV x 25 § 69),<sup>55</sup> as *delectatio* is effected by a pleasant use of language (*si suaviter loqueris*, IV xii 27 § 75). Importantly, *delectatio* supports and furthers the process of learning, something already stressed in Augustine's analysis of the *signa translata* of the Song of Songs and the *signa ambigua* of the description of communion. When one is fascinated and amused, one absorbs information more easily and stays with the subject longer (IV xi 26 § 72ff.; xii 27 § 75).<sup>56</sup> In a sense, *delectatio* is a

<sup>53</sup> Here there is a stark opposition between *delectare*, *suavitas* etc. to whatever is useful and edifying, e.g. in the lies of classical literature (*ddc* II xxv 39 § 99 *quarum mendaciis homines delectantur*).

<sup>54</sup> IV vii 17 § 52 *ornatus*; vii 18 § 54 *pulchrum*; vii 19 § 55 *mirabile decore dicendi*; § 57 *miro decore*; 20 § 58 *pulchrum*.

<sup>55</sup> *Nam delectandi gratia etiam nota dicuntur, ubi non ipsa, sed modus quo dicuntur adiudicatur.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ut teneatur ad audiendum, delectandus auditor.*

concession to the weaknesses of the audience,<sup>57</sup> but as such it is a feature of language and discourse that is ultimately dispensable: it is entirely possible that understanding of an explanation comes about effectively without the bonus of the entertainment factor; similarly, it is possible that the addressee performs whatever action he is urged to perform, without the emotional impact of *flectere* (IV xii 28 § 76f.). This leaves *docere* as the single most important function of discourse. But because many people are unable to digest truth in an unattractive guise, *delectatio* has an important place in eloquence, even in Christian eloquence (IV xiii 29 § 78).

As an illustration of the *dictio temperata* Augustine quotes a long passage from Romans 12-13, and a section from Cyprian (IV xx 40 § 111ff.; IV xxi 47 § 128ff.)—once again, the emphasis is on good examples, on reading, listening and practicing, rather than on technical advice and rules (IV xxi 50 § 133), but he soon returns to the fact that in the final analysis, *delectare* is the least important function of discourse (IV xxv 55 § 142). For although it supports and reinforces the effects of *docere* and *flectere*, it is unable to bring about those effects—the primary goals of the speaker—by itself in a reliable and predictable way (IV xxiv 54 § 141). By hearing an eloquent speech of praise or blame some people may be influenced to actually engage in the behaviour that elicited the praise and to avoid the opposite, but this is not always the case. This means that *delectare* in the middle style should never be an end in itself. Its only *raison d'être* is to reinforce and facilitate the other effects, either by making those effects come about faster, or by making them last longer (IV xxv 55 § 142). The unreliability of the 'external' effects of *delectare* is due precisely to the 'reflexive' and self-involved nature of this function of speech: unlike *docere*, it focuses on style, instead of on *res*. Unlike *movere*, it has no direct results in the behaviour of the listener, but is indicative of the stylistic achievement of the speaker only.<sup>58</sup> This is borne out by an analysis of the types of persuasion that are effected by the three functions of discourse (IV xxv 55 § 143):

Persuadet autem in summisso genere vera esse quae dicit, persuadet in grandi ut agantur quae agenda esse iam sciuntur nec aguntur, persuadet in genere temperato pulchre ornatque se dicere.

<sup>57</sup> IV xi 26 § 73; IV xiii 29 § 78; cf. Prestel, *Die Rezeption der ciceronischen Rhetorik durch Augustinus in 'de doctrina christiana'*, p. 213. See already Ar. *Rhet.* III 1. 1404a.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. IV xii 27 § 74; xiii 29 § 79 *modus ipse quo dicitur*; xxv 55 § 142 *ut eloquentia ipsa delectet*.

In the restrained style he persuades people that what he says is true; in the grand style he persuades them to do what they knew to be necessary but were not doing; in the mixed style he persuades people that he is speaking attractively or elaborately. (tr. Green)

This characteristic of turning in on itself—with its dangerous overtones of vanity—could have caused Augustine to warn the Christian speaker off this style, if he had not emphasized that no effect (of *intellegenter, libenter, oboedienter audiri*) is exclusively linked to any one style. Therefore even in the *genus temperatum*, one has to aim for every possible effect in the audience, including understanding and obedience (IV xxvi 57 § 149):

Proinde illa tria, ut intellegant qui audiunt, ut delectentur, ut oboediant, etiam in hoc genere agendum est, ubi tenet delectatio principatum.

So these three aims—that the audience understand, delight and obey—must be sought in this style too, where delight is paramount. (tr. Green)

Not only, therefore, does *delectatio* support the other two main functions of discourse, it is also redeemed and its dangers are defused, because it allows every means of persuasion to be mixed in.

One other point deserves mention: *delectatio* is not brought about by linguistic means only, but also by non-linguistic phenomena. This helps explain why a speaker can cause pleasure as a secondary effect while engaged in a didactic passage in the simple style: the perception of truth itself is delightful to the audience.<sup>59</sup> Hence, *delectare* can have a direct relationship to *res*, instead of its being completely and solely inherent in the *signa*. Thus, it is an inevitable and desirable by-product of successful teaching (cf. section 6; *ddc* IV xii 27 § 74). But then, obviously, once *delectatio* had been identified as a divine didactic method, it was bound to deserve a place in the toolbox of the human teacher.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup> IV xxvi 56 § 148 *veritas ... delectat*; cf. II xxxvii 55 § 135 *in his omnibus (= logic) ipsa spectacula veritatis saepe delectant*. This sentiment is generalized for all functions of discourse in IV xxviii 61 § 157 *ut veritas pateat, veritas placeat, veritas moveat*: here *veritas* is substituted for the words of the speaker. Thus, the *res* rather than the *signa* cause the desired effect.

<sup>60</sup> The one phenomenon that is taken to have a didactic function in the Bible, but that should never be arrogated by a human voice, is obscurity. While this may whet the curiosity and incite people to try and understand it, taking it over would suggest that the interpreter lays claim to an equally special status for his own text as an object of the exegetical efforts of others. Cf. *ddc* IV viii 22 § 61. Williams, "Language, Reality and Desire in Augustine's *de doctrina*", p. 142.

8. *Conclusion*

In this paper I looked at several aspects of Augustine's linguistic thought. His views on the relation between language and knowledge, and about the possibility and limitations of human teaching strongly urge an energetic approach: human beings have the duty to exert themselves, to try to gain insight into the truths they believe, and, if they succeed, to try to help others achieve the same understanding. Eloquence is an enrichment of wise and insightful discourse. More specifically still, even delight and entertainment are not to be scorned. They are a legitimate function of discourse with good precedents in Biblical didactics, and there is every reason to believe that *delectatio* can contribute significantly to any didactic process.

In Augustine's linguistic thought there was a structural correspondence between human language and the divine Word, between human communication and revelation. On the other hand, clearly there is also a relation of dependence. Successful human communication, as well as acquisition and transmission of knowledge and insight, crucially depend on divine enlightenment, while normally speaking requiring a great deal of human exertion. Successful exegesis depends on a prior understanding of (and belief in) the correct solutions.

This is never lost from sight, not even while recognizing the contributions of genuine and pure eloquence in book IV of *De doctrina christiana*. Augustine's terminology may serve as an illustration. The eloquent Christian is called (*noster*) *eloquens* (e.g. IV xv 32 § 87), or *eloquens ecclesiasticus* (e.g. IV xiii 29 § 79), or simply *dictor* (e.g. IV xxvi 56 § 148), whereas in Cicero's *Orator*, the prevalent term is precisely *orator*.<sup>61</sup> Augustine generally avoids this word which in his time would evoke associations of public showmanship. Therefore, when he finally does use the term *orator*, that word is charged with meaning, and it is a 'new' meaning (IV xv 32 § 87):

Et haec [namely effective speech leading to *intelligentior, libentior* and *oboedientior audiri*] se posse, si potuerit et in quantum potuerit, pietate magis orationum quam oratorum facultate non dubitet, ut orando pro se ac pro illis quos est allocuturus, sit orator antequam dictor.

<sup>61</sup> Augustine uses the word once in the phrase *oratoribus gentilium poetisve*, pagan orators or poets, IV v 10 § 29.

He should be in no doubt that any ability he has and however much he has derives more from his devotion to prayer than his dedication to oratory; and so, by praying for himself and for those he is about to address, he must become a man of prayer before becoming a man of words. (tr. Green)<sup>62</sup>

This reinterpretation of a word that was so centrally anchored in the pagan rhetorical tradition is symbolic for Augustine's outlook in *De doctrina christiana*. The pagan *orator*, and the technical discipline which had created him, had become redundant, because before anything else the Christian *eloquens* is a man of prayer, a new kind of *orator*.

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<sup>62</sup> For a comparable pun, this time on *dictor* and *dictator*, cf. *contra Cresc.* 3,19,22; Weisengruber, "Augustins Wertung von Grammatik und Rhetorik im Traktat *contra Cresconium*", p. 113.

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